JUNE 1971

MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

VOLUME 23

2

MODERN CAPITALISM

PAUL M. SWEEZY

BOLIVIA BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

JAMES PETRAS

Nader's *Interstate Commerce Omission*

REVIEWED BY ROBERT CARSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS | VOLUME 23 | NUMBER 2 | JUNE 1971

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: Modern Capitalism by Paul M. Sweezy 1
BOLIVIA BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS by James Petras 11
BOOKS:
"First, the Hearts of Men . . ." by Keith Buchanan 26
How Not to Treat the Railroads by Robert B. Carson 32
American Labor and Foreign Policy by Melvyn Dubofsky 40
CORRESPONDENCE:
Murderers vs. Murdered: Which Side Are You On? 49
The Polish Economy by Lynn Turgeon 52
A SONG OF PEACE by David Fernández 56
WORLD EVENTS by Scott Nearing 59

MONTHLY REVIEW: Published monthly except July and August, when bimonthly, and copyright © 1971, by Monthly Review, Inc. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS: USA: 116 West 14th Street, New York, N. Y. 10011. Telephone: (212) 691-2555.
Europe: Frances Kelly, 9 King Edward Mansions, 629 Fulham Road, London, S.W. 6., Telephone: Renown 8824.
MR Edizione Italiana, Viale Mazzini 4, Roma 00195, Telephone: 383112.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTOR: B. De Boer, 188 High Street, Nutley, N. J.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: One year—$7 in the U.S.; $8 foreign.
By 1st class mail—U.S. $12; elsewhere $14.
By air mail—No. America $14; So. America and Europe $18; Asia (incl. USSR), Africa, Australia $20.

EDITORS: Paul M. Sweezy Harry Magdoff Leo Huberman (1903-1968)
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Bobbye Ortiz

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

One of the odd things about proofreading is that if the typesetter misreads a word but sets a different word which in and of itself is perfectly correct, proofreaders are quite likely not to notice, since what they are specially on the lookout for is typographical and not textual errors. A case in point occurred in the May issue of MR: the first two words on page 12 read "supernatural counter-revolution"—a novel concept, to say the least. In the original text it was "superstructural counter-revolution." Pondering this, Paul Sweezy (the author) came to the conclusion that, in the context of today's political debates, the really appropriate expression would have been "cultural counter-revolution." And so it will be if the piece is ever reprinted.

While we are on the subject of errors, we have several more to report. One is an inadvertent omission from a sentence in the Review of the Month for April. The first sentence of the second paragraph on page 3 should read: "Table 1 . . . shows the participation rates for the age, sex,

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MODERN CAPITALISM

By Paul M. Sweezy

The following is based on an article written for a new Japanese encyclopedia. With the addition of part I as an introduction, it has also been presented in somewhat modified form to several university audiences..—P.M.S.

I

I want to begin with a fairly lengthy passage from Joseph A. Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis* (pp. 12-13):

What distinguishes the "scientific" economist from all the other people who think, talk, and write about economic topics is a command of techniques that we class under three heads: history, statistics, and "theory." The three together make up what we shall call economic analysis.

Of these fundamental fields, economic history—which issues into and includes present-day facts—is by far the most important. I wish to state right now that if, starting my work in economics afresh, I were told that I could study only one of these three but could have my choice, it would be economic history that I should choose. And this on three grounds. First, the subject matter of economics is essentially a unique process in historic time. Nobody can hope to understand the economic phenomena of any, including the present, epoch who has not an adequate command of historical *facts* and an adequate amount of historical *sense* or of what may be described as *historical experience*. Second, the historical report cannot be purely economic but must inevitably reflect also "institutional" facts that are not purely economic: therefore it affords the best method for understanding how economic and non-economic facts *are* related to one another and how

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the various social sciences *should* be related to one another. [Here a footnote: Owing to the unreliability of "theories" on this subject, I personally believe the study of history to be not only the best but the only method for this purpose.] Third, it is, I believe, the fact that most of the fundamental errors currently committed in economic analysis are due to lack of historical experience more often than to any other shortcoming of the economist's equipment. History must of course be understood to include fields that have acquired different names as a consequence of specialization, such as prehistoric reports and ethnology (anthropology).

I personally believe this to be one of the wisest and most profound, as well as most neglected, of Schumpeter's teachings. Taken seriously, the implications would be incredibly far-reaching. The more or less standard economics curriculum of American colleges and universities would have to be radically transformed from beginning to end. Economic history, interpreted in a very broad sense, which has become the stepchild of the profession—if indeed it ranks even that high—would have not only to be restored to the position it occupied forty or fifty years ago but elevated far above that position. In fact it would have to be made the centerpiece of the curriculum around which everything else would be organized. And one final implication of a different sort: by Schumpeter's standard, as set forth in the passage quoted, I am sorry to say that there is really no such thing as scientific economics in this country today. Or perhaps I should say that if scientific economics in his sense does exist, it has escaped my attention.

Please do not misunderstand me. My purpose in beginning on this note is not to criticize or put down. I do not blame the present state of economics on any individuals or groups. It is itself an aspect of an historical process with deep roots and manifold ramifications which I could not even pretend to analyze in the time available to me. My purpose is rather to provide the rationale for the kind of talk I propose to indulge in.

Since I believe that it is history, in both Schumpeter's meanings of "facts" and "sense," which is primarily missing in today's economics, I could not very well fail to use this opportunity to attempt to indicate some of the ways I think the lack could be made good. Let me try then in desperate brevity (to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

use a favorite expression of Schumpeter) to put "modern capitalism" into a meaningful historical and global perspective.

II

Capitalism as a world system had its origins in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries when Europeans, mastering the art of long-distance navigation, broke out of their little corner of the globe and roamed the seven seas, conquering, plundering, and trading. Ever since then capitalism has consisted of two sharply contrasting parts: on the one hand a handful of dominant exploiting countries and on the other hand a much larger number of dominated and exploited countries. *The two are indissolubly linked together, and nothing that happens in either part can be understood if it is considered in abstraction from the system as a whole.* It is important to stress that this is as true of "modern capitalism," meaning the global capitalist system of the last half of the twentieth century, as it was of the predominantly mercantile capitalism of the period before the Industrial Revolution. In what follows we shall refer to the two parts of the world capitalist system as "developed" and "underdeveloped." We thus do not subscribe to the usage which equates "modern" with "developed." The underdeveloped part of the system is as modern as the developed part.

III

The central dynamic force in the world capitalist system as a whole is the capital accumulation process in the developed countries. It began with what Marx called the primary accumulation of capital, a double process involving: (a) the creation of a wage-labor force, and b) the amassing of liquid capital. The wage-labor force was created in the main through the expropriation of the peasantry, and a large part of the liquid capital was provided from the loot and profits extracted from the subjugated dependencies. After this stage came the "normal" process of capital accumulation, i.e., the production of surplus value by wage labor, the appropriation of this surplus value by capitalists, and the conversion of a large part of the surplus value into additional capital. The process is by its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

very nature an expanding one, always requiring new fields for investment, more labor power and raw materials, and larger markets for finished products. Creating conditions favorable to the most rapid accumulation of capital and removing obstacles which impede the process are the central tasks of the capitalist state to which, in the final analysis, all its other functions are subordinated.

In the course of the accumulation process, capital undergoes technological and organizational transformations. The earliest form of capitalist production was what Marx called manufacture (many craftsmen working in a single enterprise with a more or less elaborate specialization and division of labor). Under the impact of the Industrial Revolution (roughly 1750 to 1850 in England), manufacture gave way to machine industry (in which the focus shifts from the worker to the machine and the former becomes increasingly a mere appendage of the latter). The development of machinery and of other advanced technologies in the fields of industry, transportation, and communication made both possible and necessary a steady expansion in the size of the viable unit of capitalist production. The small capitalist proprietorship or partnership which characterized the early stages of development gave way to the corporation, an organizational form which permits an unlimited concentration and centralization of capital, and at the same time gives rise to and in turn is fostered by an increasingly elaborate financial superstructure of banks, securities markets, holding companies, etc.

The concentration, centralization, and corporatization of capital began in earnest in the last third of the nineteenth century and has been proceeding ever since. In the United States, which by the mid-twentieth century had become the leading developed capitalist nation, there were three great waves (interrupted by periods of war or depression): around the turn of the century, in the 1920s, and since the Second World War. By 1962 the 100 largest manufacturing corporations (about .05 percent of all manufacturing corporations) controlled 58 percent of the land, buildings, and equipment used in manufacturing. A similar situation exists in the other developed capitalist countries.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IV

With the growth of the giant corporation, capitalism left its competitive stage and entered its monopoly stage. In the competitive stage individual firms grow by reducing costs, realizing larger profits, and investing in increased capacity to turn out products which, being essentially indistinguishable from the products of rivals, can always be sold at or slightly under the going market price. But as some firms prosper and grow and others lag behind and drop out, the average firm in an industry becomes so large that it must take account of the effect of its own production on market price. It then begins to function more and more like a monopolist, for whom the problem of continued growth is radically transformed. Monopoly profits make possible even more rapid growth than in the past, but the need to maintain monopoly prices dictates a policy of slowing down and carefully regulating the expansion of productive capacity. Given these possibilities and constraints, the result is an irresistible drive on the part of the monopolistic firm to move outside of and beyond its historical field of operation, to penetrate new industries and new markets. Thus the typical production unit in modern developed capitalism is a giant corporation, which is both conglomerate (operating in many industries) and multinational (operating in many countries).

Even in capitalism's competitive stage, the accumulation of capital always tended to outrun the expansion of markets. The result was periodic crises and depressions in which much capital was liquidated or devalued as a necessary prelude to a renewal of the accumulation process. This problem of imbalance between accumulation and expansion of markets is accentuated under monopoly capitalism: as already noted, monopolistic pricing tends to generate both an acceleration of accumulation and a slowing down of the growth of output. The result is that monopoly capitalism is characterized not only by "normal" business cycles but also by a powerful tendency to secular stagnation, such as materialized in the United States in the period 1907-1915 and again with multiplied force in the depression years of the 1930s.

Given the tendency to secular stagnation, the continued

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

existence of monopoly capitalism depends on the existence or creation of sufficiently strong counteracting forces to permit the system to operate at a politically tolerable level of production and employment. In part these forces are generated within the economy itself. In conditions of monopoly, competition among giant corporations is not eliminated; rather it is displaced from the field of price to the field of sales promotion (through advertising, product differentiation and innovation, model changes and other forms of contrived obsolescence, etc.). In this way a huge sales effort builds up which employs a vast amount of unproductive labor and in other ways increases the effective demand for goods and services.

But the sales effort by itself is not enough to neutralize the tendency to stagnation. This therefore becomes increasingly the responsibility of the state which, as noted above, has as its primary task to assure the smooth functioning of the accumulation process. The state can counteract stagnation by suitably large expenditures on welfare and/or warfare, both of which are indispensable to monopoly capitalism for other reasons: welfare as a way of placating the masses and dissuading them from turning to revolutionary politics, and warfare as a means used by each leading capitalist power to maximize its economic "living space" and to control underdeveloped and potentially rebellious dependent countries. Beginning with the period of active preparations for the Second World War and right down to the present, warfare expenditures have clearly been the dominant and, on the whole, sufficient counteracting force preventing the world capitalist system from returning to a state of chronic depression such as characterized most of the decade of the 1930s.

V

In the beginning the relations between the developed and underdeveloped parts of the world capitalist system were based on force. The stronger conquered the weaker, plundered their resources, subjected them to unequal trading relations, and reorganized their economic structures (e.g., by introducing slavery) to serve the needs of the Europeans. In the course of these predatory operations vast colonial empires were built up and fought over by the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and British; and the wealth transferred from the colonies to the metropoles was an important factor in the economic development of the latter.

Gradually the element of force receded into the background to be replaced by "normal" economic relations of trade and investment—without, however, in any way weakening the basic development/underdevelopment pattern, or stopping the transfer of wealth from the periphery to the center. After her victory in the Napoleonic Wars and the related dissolution of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas, Britain—which was already industrially far ahead of the other developed countries—moved into a position of virtual monopoly of world trade in manufactured goods. In these circumstances Britain espoused the doctrine of economic liberalism and managed with remarkable success to export it to many other countries, both developed and underdeveloped. The result was to reinforce Britain's economic hegemony and to make the maintenance of formal colonies increasingly unnecessary. The imperialism of capitalism's early youth seemed to have outlived its usefulness: laissez faire and the market could do the job even better.

This situation did not last long, however. Strong capitalist powers were rising to challenge Britain's supremacy: France recovered, Germany united, the United States began to realize its enormous potential, and Japan deliberately discarded its feudal structure to emulate the most developed capitalist nations and at the same time to ward off the threats of subjugation and colonization which were already engulfing China. In all these countries the formation of monopolies in the manner already described proceeded apace; and new technologies in metallurgy, energy production, petroleum, chemicals, etc., gave fresh urgency to the problem of controlling sources of raw materials and markets. The closing decades of the nineteenth century therefore witnessed the upsurge of a new imperialism. All of Africa was partitioned in a few years, and everywhere the developed countries turned increasingly to the use of force to subjugate dependencies, exclude rivals, and preempt bases and territory of actual or potential strategic value. Militarism became more and more decisive in all aspects of the life of the dominant powers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Out of this situation arose the First World War (1914-1918) which had as major consequences for the global capitalist system: (a) extensive reshuffling of colonies and dependencies in favor of the victorious countries; (b) emergence of the United States as economically the strongest capitalist country; (c) socialist revolution in Tsarist Russia, the weakest of the imperialist powers, removing one sixth of the earth's land surface from the orbit of capitalism and demonstrating to the underdeveloped countries that for them socialist development is a viable alternative to continued capitalist underdevelopment; and (d) birth and/or vigorous growth of national liberation movements in many underdeveloped countries, for the most part strongly influenced by the Russian Revolution. Thenceforth the dominant capitalist powers had to cope not only with their own internecine struggles but also with challenges from the rival socialist system and from increasingly militant liberation movements in their dependencies.

The Second World War and its outcome faithfully reflected these realities. Started as a war by the "have-not" imperialist powers (Germany, Japan, Italy) to redivide the world, it soon acquired, with the Nazi invasion of the USSR, a capitalism-versus-socialism character as well. For reasons of survival the threatened capitalist powers and the invaded Soviet Union made common cause, defeating the Axis challenge. But there was not and could not be a return to the status quo ante. Eastern Europe was liberated from Nazi occupation by the Soviet Union and entered the socialist camp. America, enriched by the war while all the other imperialist powers were severely damaged, became the undisputed leader of world capitalism. But perhaps most important of all, national liberation struggles in the underdeveloped world reached new heights. One result was the victory of socialist revolutions in China, North Vietnam, North Korea, and later Cuba. Another was the dissolution of the old colonial empires (except the Portuguese), usually voluntarily undertaken by the mother countries in the hope of heading off the development of genuinely revolutionary movements among the oppressed peoples of the colonies. Non-revolutionary decolonization resulted in the substitution of neocolonialism for the classical form, and in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passage of large areas of the globe out of the old empires into a new world-wide neocolonial American Empire. This relative weakening of the other imperialist powers, taken together with the socialist and national liberation challenges to the imperialist system as a whole, resulted in the establishment and willing acceptance of U.S. hegemony over the entire capitalist system. Militarily, this meant that the United States had to bear the greater part of the burden of "protecting" the "free world," a function which has already involved two major wars (Korea and Vietnam) and numerous military or police actions in widely scattered parts of the world. The arrangement has not been without important economic advantages for the developed countries of Europe and Japan: relieved of crushing military obligations, they have been able to compete effectively with the United States in world markets largely sustained by American military expenditures both inside and outside the United States. And their giant corporations, though starting later than U.S. corporations in the race to establish production and sales subsidiaries throughout both the underdeveloped and the developed parts of the capitalist world, have given increasing indications in recent times that they have the strength to stay in the race and even to penetrate the United States itself.

VI

Until recently there were few dissenters from the view that the future of capitalism would be determined in the developed countries. If—so the reasoning goes—by means of timely state action in the fields of fiscal and monetary policy and industrial planning, capitalism can be made to work well in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, and if wise policies of trade, investment, and aid are adopted toward the underdeveloped countries, then not only will capitalism survive in the developed countries but it will enable the underdeveloped countries to attain the status of developed ones. If, on the other hand, these tasks are not successfully carried out, then the classical Marxian predictions of proletarian socialist revolutions in the developed countries will come true. In either case, the fate of capitalism will be decided by and in the developed part of the world system.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Since the Second World War, however, it has become increasingly clear that the principal contradiction in the system, at least in the present historical period, is not *within* the developed part but *between* the developed and underdeveloped parts. As we have already seen, the relations of the one to the other (and the policies which grow out of those relations) are fundamentally exploitative: they perpetuate and deepen the development/underdevelopment pattern rather than ameliorating and eventually eliminating it. Some statistical growth has been achieved in some of the dependent countries (e.g., Mexico, Pakistan, South Korea), but most of the increase has gone to tiny oligarchies, while the condition of the masses has not only not improved but in most cases has actually deteriorated. The much discussed population explosion, irreversible in any near future, aggravates the situation and in fact makes it virtually certain that widespread famine lies ahead. Meanwhile, the peoples of the underdeveloped countries have learned, especially from the experience of China since 1949, that there is a way out of the trap in which they now find themselves caught.

That way out lies through revolutionary national liberation struggles of the kind the people of Indochina are now conducting against the United States. Further such struggles in other parts of Asia, in Latin America, and in Africa seem inevitable, with a similar response from the United States, perhaps joined by the other imperialist countries. It is too soon to attempt to predict the outcome of this generalization of national liberation struggles. Clearly, it might be world-wide atomic warfare, from which no country or system will emerge in viable condition. But even now we can say that a meaningful "victory" for capitalism is exceedingly unlikely. The Vietnam war has already proved that wars of this nature and magnitude cause profound divisions and tensions within the involved developed countries. It seems reasonable to suppose that their continuation and escalation will drive these divisions and tensions to the breaking point. If this should happen, the classical Marxian vision of socialist revolution in the most developed capitalist countries would finally come into its own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOLIVIA BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

BY JAMES PETRAS

Three major political upheavals have occurred in Bolivia's recent history: (1) the nationalist revolution of 1952, led and directed by the *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario* (MNR); (2) the 1964 military coup of General Barrientos; and (3) the October 1970 mass mobilization which defeated a military-rightist coup and put General Torres in power.

The nationalist revolution of 1952 led to the expropriation of the tin mines (Bolivia's major export product), a sweeping agrarian reform involving the expropriation of most landed estates, the formation of a workers' militia, the extension of peasant unions, etc. However, between 1952-1953 when the MNR took power and 1964 when it was overthrown, these reforms were eroded in the following ways:

First, with U.S. aid, assistance, and training, the military apparatus was reconstituted—it never had been *fully* destroyed. New and old officers were recruited who saw in the armed miners a threat to their status and power. Initially attempting to balance between social forces, the MNR government increasingly relied on the Army to force regressive economic and social policies on the populace.

James Petras is the Director of Latin American Development Studies at the Institute of Public Administration, Pennsylvania State University. He has been in Latin America during the current academic year, visiting Bolivia in March.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Second, the extensive land redistribution resulted in small fragmented land-holdings, with little or no effort being made to organize the peasants in larger units of production or to provide necessary credits, technical assistance, infrastructure, etc., which would have made the peasantry an effective force in economic development.

Third, the MNR was able to "nationalize" the tin mines without overt U.S. intervention because U.S. economic interests were not involved—the nationalizations involved Bolivian and European capitalists. Subsequently the "nationalism" of the MNR, under pressure from the United States, gave way to a pro-imperialist position. The economic (and political) recommendations of international agencies largely controlled by the United States were accepted by the MNR and imposed on the populace: devaluations, salary and wage freezes, concessions to foreign private investors, and the like.

Fourth, the MNR was nevertheless able to construct a formidable political party apparatus that penetrated all sectors of the society. The fusion of party and government functionaries and the bureaucratization of the peasant unions and some urban unions created a "new class," petty-bourgeois in mentality, vitally concerned with advancing personal careers, and seizing economic opportunities. The political effect of the growth of the "new class" was the fragmentation of the party into several factions, deeply immersed in "spoils" politics, mutually breeding corruption in public office. If the politics of the MNR led to the resurrection of the right-wing and subsequently to the 1964 military coup, the public conduct of its members and factions gave the Right the "moral" justification for taking power.

While the MNR maintained control of the state apparatus, the possibility of revolutionary socialists' leading a revolutionary struggle were limited by two factors, one organizational and the other ideological. The organizational apparatus of the MNR reached down into each and every trade union and neighborhood; some lower cadres continued to believe that the leaders would someday see the light and return to the true path of social revolution. Others maintained their support in exchange for small favors and symbolic payoffs. At the same

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time, the revolutionary nationalist rhetoric of the MNR continued to mystify the masses. This ideological mystification was only slowly dissolved in the cities by the rightward drift of the MNR. In the countryside the peasant masses, manipulated by the new team of government-party-union functionaries, were led to believe that any change (either to the Left or to the Right) would result in the loss of their increasingly subdivided subsistence plots of land.

Despite the anti-popular measures adopted between 1956 and 1964, the MNR maintained itself in power through its organizational-ideological apparatus. But it was too weak to thwart an army-led uprising in 1964. The anti-popular policies had undercut any possibility of a popular uprising to save the MNR government.

The new conservatism introduced by the Barrientos coup of 1964, however, was selective in the choice of policies. Instead of reversing the agrarian reform in the sense of calling back the old landowners, Barrientos encouraged new agrarian capitalists: large-scale commercial production was supported; differentiation among the poor and better-off beneficiaries of the land reform was promoted; and the peasant union bureaucrats, previously subsidized by the MNR, now received their favors and slaps on the back from Barrientos.

Concessions to U.S. and European private capital were extended and consolidated: the social peace and political atmosphere necessary to attract foreign capitalist investment were achieved by Barrientos. The militant class-conscious sectors of the working class, the miners' unions, were savagely attacked: throughout 1965-1966 hundreds of working-class militants were killed, thousands were arrested. The radio stations and newspapers and the political infrastructure which the miners had maintained despite the MNR were taken over. The MNR party apparatus, lacking state funds, its leadership deeply compromised, was incapable of mobilizing an effective resistance. The long night (1964-1969) of the Barrientos dictatorship did have one major political effect of strategic importance for the development of revolutionary socialist politics: it shattered the MNR organizational apparatus, and exiled the leaders, thus breaking the MNR's political hegemony over the popular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement. Barrientos's "nationalist" ideology combined with his pro-United States and anti-working class policies further demystified the people's faith in "revolutionary nationalism." Nevertheless, while Barrientos destroyed MNR political hegemony and laid the groundwork for socialist politics, his violently repressive measures seriously weakened the capacity of the class-conscious political organizations to take advantage of the situation.

The death (or assassination) of Barrientos and the assumption of power by Ovando provided the first opportunity for the working-class forces to recover from the repression and to reverse some of the pro-imperialist policies adopted during the previous periods. In retrospect the Ovando government can be seen to have been a transitional political phenomenon which served as a bridge to the present.

At its high point, with Quiroga Santa Cruz as Minister of Mines, the Ovando government nationalized the holdings of Gulf Oil and recognized the right of workers to organize, strike, etc. The liberalization of the Ovando regime and the nationalization measures occurred less because of mass pressure than because of the initiative of the left-nationalists in the cabinet. Lacking a solid social base, the "progressive" period of the transitional Ovando government was short and the measures taken were, in themselves, of little revolutionary significance. Ovando's turn to the Right during the last months of his regime was "structurally" determined: firmly linked to the supporters of the Barrientos military leadership, Ovando sought to pacify U.S. and Bolivian financial and business interests, disconcerted by the measures taken by the nationalists in his government. Once again "revolutionary nationalism" attempted first to balance between the bourgeoisie and imperialism on the one hand and the working class on the other, only to move to the Right. Each time the choice of progressive measures open to the revolutionary nationalists within the capitalist framework was more limited.

The attempted right-wing coup of October 1970 (led by General Miranda et al.) was an attempt to restore the police-state capitalism of the Barrientos period. The effective mobilization of the working class and the defeat of the coup signaled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the *recovery* of working-class solidarity. Nevertheless, the mass movement lacked a leadership capable of taking power and expressing the socialist orientation of strategic sectors of the working class. In the struggle against the October coup, the working class and socialist groups were clearly in ascendance.

General Torres, recognizing its potential power, offered 50 percent of the cabinet posts to the Marxist Left. The fragmentation and divisions were so great however that they could not take advantage of the crisis even on the governmental level. The absence of arms was a key factor limiting the capacity of the working class to take total power in October 1970, and again in January and March of 1971.

The theoretical question of a revolutionary party or leadership was resolved in practice: lacking both, the semi-armed and socialist oriented working-class movement ended up supporting the left-nationalist sector of the army led by General Torres. Showing great power of mobilization *against* rightist-fomented coups, the working-class movement was too divided within itself to exercise hegemony over the whole of society. The initial victory of Torres was largely based on the effective national strike called by the Bolivian Workers Confederation: the military divided, once the workers' initial political force had been demonstrated, one sector supporting the ultra Right, the other General Torres.

Once Torres had convinced sectors of the military that they had more to lose by joining the Right against the workers' general strike than by working with him, he played his political cards in such a way as to consolidate his personal rule. His program contained the old "revolutionary nationalist" formulas in a new context. Torres nationalized part of the sugar industry, restored the miners' working and living conditions to what they were prior to 1965, promised to "deepen" the revolution, nationalized the processing of tin by-products, and freed political prisoners. It is clear that to keep in power and maintain his program within the capitalist framework, Torres needs to hold onto the army and the national bourgeoisie, *even while they prepare plots to overthrow his government.* The Torres government is one of the few governments in the world which tolerates and finances its own internal subversion. Nevertheless

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

each coup that fails weakens the Right and increases working-class pressure for a complete restructuring of society. Torres has shown considerable ability to maneuver, as well as personal courage, and this has helped him to stay in power. His fundamental weakness is his attempt to build a government on a socioeconomic program ("revolutionary nationalism") which has little or no support either among the politicized workers or among the bourgeoisie and its allies in the military and the U.S. Embassy. In this situation the political crisis continues, provoking a more profound polarization which will probably lead to new rightist plots and confrontations with the socialist working class. The real struggle today is over whether Bolivia will become a capitalist police state or turn toward socialism.

President Torres and the Miners: Socialism vs. Nationalism

In response to the attempted January 10 right-wing coup, twenty thousand tin miners, armed with guns and dynamite, marched on La Paz to repudiate the putschists. In Plaza Murillo, in front of the government palace, President Torres was ready with his speech. The workers, however, were there not to listen but to *tell* Torres where they stood. The two most popular slogans on the march were: "The people armed, the people respected!" and "Long live Socialist Bolivia; death to the fascist coup!" Torres began his speech: "In this very historic square I promised my people a government of the people when I assumed office last October 7. . . ."

The workers interrupted repeatedly: "Arms yes! Promises no!"

"As you know, things don't come about by miracles. The workers of Bolivia need arms and tools. But arms and tools need to be bought. This you can be sure: everything will arrive with time."

The workers insisted: "Socialism!"

"Beginning tomorrow," continued Torres, "we will meet with the leaders of the workers, universities, peasants, and progressive intellectuals in order to study the active participation of the people in the center of the government. We will produce a Bolivian government for Bolivians."

"Workers to power!" the mass gathering repeated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Torres continued: "The armed forces are being purified. They will be the guardians of our revolutionary nationalism."

In response the masses insisted: "Socialism!"

Torres responded: "Have patience, we are not going to stay long in this" [i.e., "revolutionary nationalism"].

This historic meeting between the Bolivian working class and Torres clearly showed that as far as the masses were concerned socialism is on the immediate agenda, that "revolutionary nationalism" has lost its hold over the masses. One result is that many previous revolutionary nationalist political leaders now differentiate themselves from Torres and have come out with the demand for socialism.

Popular Assembly: Institutionalizing Revolutionary Power

Torres has resisted up to now (March 1971) the formation of a Popular Assembly made up of workers and students organizations with legislative powers. The reasons are obvious —the revolutionary process would be greatly accelerated, the military would react negatively, and Torres himself would be displaced as the key figure in Bolivian politics. In the meantime Torres chose to criticize the organizers of the Popular Assembly for allowing the MNR to participate, noting correctly that the MNR is a pro-imperialist party. The revolutionary Left (Marxists and Catholics) claim that a substantial sector of the La Paz working class still formally considers itself part of the MNR and that the only way to break the hold of the MNR leadership is to include its trade unionists in the Popular Assembly. Despite the enormous possibilities which the Assembly presents for carrying out a socialist transformation from below and the general support which the project has, the various factions of the Left have not been able to agree among themselves sufficiently to effectively organize it. On the other hand, attempts by a handful of ideologues of the "nationalist Left" to put together a "front" in support of Torres have also been unsuccessful.

The lack of firm political organization and institutions thus allows Torres a considerable amount of room for political maneuvers between social/political forces and the army, but at the same time makes him highly vulnerable. The only insti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tutional grouping to which Torres "belongs" is the army—and this has not exactly been his source of loyal support.

The Miners

The epicenter of working-class socialism is the tin miners. Among the most class-conscious and politicized workers in the world, the Bolivian tin miners have shown enormous capacity to move as a decisive force in crucial historic moments. The miners serve as a rallying point for the urban poor, the industrial workers, and the radicalized students. While the absolute number of tin miners, especially those in the large mines, is probably fewer than five percent of the labor force, their strategic position in the economy, their organizational coherence, their class consciousness, and their ability to catalyze other forces into action, make them a key element in the struggle for socialism. The political leadership of the tin miners' union is therefore a major determinant of national politics.

Two major forces are competing for political hegemony in the miners' union in March 1971: the supporters, in one form or another, of "revolutionary nationalism"—Juan Lechín's Left National Revolutionary Party (PRIN) and the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB)—and on the other hand the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers' Party (POR) led by Escobar and Lora, and a variety of revolutionary groupings and individuals, some associated with revolutionary Catholic circles. Neither grouping wishes to be identified as *oficialista,* that is pro-government (which is the equivalent of being defeated); yet leading Communist trade unionists consider the revolution a "process" —a revived version of the discredited notion of revolution in "stages." In this stage, the PCB argues, the role of the workers is largely "defensive": the trade unions must defend Torres against the Right and pressure him in the direction of anti-imperialist policies. In practice the PCB is essentially lining up behind Torres and *his* program. At the same time Torres is being buttressed by new programs of Soviet and Eastern bloc assistance. The POR, while favoring tactical unity against right-wing coups, sees the need for the active intervention of the working class in the political struggle through the formation of the Popular Assembly. The critical question about the POR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is whether it can unite with other revolutionary socialist groups or must remain a minority which serves only to mobilize masses in defensive struggles and to develop well trained political cadres. The transformation of the POR from a small but influential cadre group among the tin miners into a national political force seems to depend on the party's success in winning over a majority of the miners to its program.

The national Bolivian workers' union, the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB) has taken a position very close to the POR, describing the political situation in the following terms: "At the present time, there exists in the country an open duality of power that is expressed each day and each hour in the series of events that pit, on one side, the workers and students against, on the other, the private entrepreneurs and *gorilas* [military]. The reformist and vacillating government of General Torres is in fact caught in this crossfire and unable to define its political line, which makes it in any case a prisoner of events. . . ." (*Rebelión,* La Paz, January-February 1971, p. 1).

The Peasantry

Since 1952 the peasantry has not played a leadership role in national politics. Rather, the peasants have been dominated by whatever political group is in power. The peasant union leadership in Cochabamba in its turn supported the MNR governments prior to 1964, and since then the Barrientos, Ovando, and Torres regimes. While numerically a majority of the economically active population, the mass of the peasantry, once having received their plots of land, have been subject to local peasant union leaders (many of whom are not, strictly speaking, peasants) who have entered into clientele relationships with government functionaries. The National Peasant Confederation officially favors the military-peasant pact. Nevertheless, in certain areas peasants have been mobilized against the status quo, from the Right as well as from the Left. In Santa Cruz, the new-rich and dynamic region in the south, the local bourgeoisie and military have organized peasants, working especially with the successful "middle" peasants. The March 1971 uprising in Santa Cruz (a mini-coup) was largely the product of a right-wing peasant movement directed by the local bourgeoisie.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Independent Peasant Bloc is the major left-wing organization and has come out in favor of socialism. However, it represents less than 10 percent of the peasantry. More important, several thousand land settlers (*colonos*), largely ex-miners and unemployed workers, who are farming on the eastern Bolivian frontier, recently formed a new association and have strongly endorsed a workers' and peasants' government as the basis for socialism. Given the uneven political development of different popular forces, the current notion of the revolutionary Left is that the workers must first take power and then win over the peasants, believing that it would be difficult or impossible to win over the peasantry *before* taking power.

University and Church: New Allies of Socialist Revolution?

Up until the past two years, the major student federations and the bulk of the student body had shown little or no interest in social revolution. On the contrary, the universities had taken part in anti-working class movements. The Christian Democratic students were the major political force and, while verbalizing support for social change, showed little interest in overthrowing capitalism. Nevertheless, the death of Che Guevara and the moral example of the guerrilla movement initiated a serious discussion among student and especially Christian Democratic groups. A highly accelerated process of radicalization took place. The student section of the Christian Democratic Party split and went on to provide a majority of the members of the Teoponte guerrilla group which went into action in June 1970. In the meantime a major university reform movement led by revolutionary socialists brought about changes in administration, teaching personnel, and curriculum; and, most important, redefined the universities' relationship to the class structure. The process has led to the formation of workers' universities and to closer working relationships between students, workers, and peasants. The radicalization of the university and its close ties to the working-class movement has led to several important joint actions. Students and workers have jointly participated in the mass mobilization against the right-wing attempts at coups and have participated on an equal basis in the leadership (*Comando Popular*) of the mass strug-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gle. The joint actions of students and workers, following the defeat of the guerrilla groups, have largely served to persuade students of the ineffectiveness of the guerrilla *foco* theory of revolution, and to re-orient them toward armed mass struggle. The universities thus add a new and possibly important force to the miners' struggle for socialism.

The Bolivian Catholic Church is divided into a number of sections. The more conservative hierarchical groups express their anti-socialist perspective through the daily newspaper *Presencia,* while the leftward-moving clergy, especially the ISAL (Church and Society in Latin America) group, have openly declared their support for socialist revolution. There are still some ambiguities in ISAL's formulations regarding the possibilities of revolutionary nationalists' transforming themselves into socialists in the process of struggle. Nevertheless the constant interaction between priests and workers has had the effect of radicalizing the priests. Moreover, there is little doubt that the workers' struggle for socialism is benefiting from the additional resources (radio stations, publications) and articulate spokesmen which ISAL and the Christian Socialists are bringing to the movement.

The Role of the Military

The army is divided into three groups: about 40 percent support Torres, another 40 percent are to varying degrees in opposition, and about 20 percent (mainly younger officers) favor somewhat more "radical" politics, providing they do not affect the structure of the army. On the whole, the military is predominantly an instrument of U.S. and Bolivian bourgeois politics, profoundly hostile to working-class socialism, for the obvious reason that the soldiers perceive socialist revolution as a threat to their institutional position. Torres shares the same loyalties to the military as an institution and has thus been very reluctant to sweep away obvious centers of military conspiracy and subversion. Only after major armed confrontations has Torres "retired" or sent abroad (as military attachés) military opponents. Lacking a firm popular social base or party, Torres relies on his men of confidence in the military leadership and his personal ability to win popularity through specific measures.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

U.S. Imperialism in the Present Situation

With the death of René Barrientos U.S. businessmen and policy-makers lost a solid ally. Since then U.S. policy has alternated between defensive and offensive tactics. The nationalization of Gulf pushed the United States on the defensive: pressure was applied, but the decision stood; hence U.S. policy shifted with considerable success to the demand for "adequate" compensation. At the same time the Miranda coup of October 1970 had the support of U.S. business interests and the Embassy. With Torres in the presidency, the United States has adapted itself to the "new reality" in two ways: working with the developmentalists and military *within* the government to *limit* change, while keeping in touch with the right-wing business groups, peasant organizations, and military cabals which are hoping to overthrow Torres and restore a Barrientos-style police state.

The Guerrilla Movement and the Bolivian Revolution

Though Bolivia's two guerrilla movements—the 1967 group led by Che Guevara and the Teoponte group led by Chato Peredo in 1970—were defeated militarily, their indirect effects were considerable. The 1967 guerrilla movement provoked profound crises in the university and Church, and to a lesser degree among the military: the student movement, especially the Christian Democratic leadership, moved sharply to the Left, eventually splitting the party and forming the key nucleus in the Teoponte guerrilla group of 1970. Sectors of the military began to seek a "nationalist" program to head off increasing popular pressure, especially as the antiguerrilla operation was so visibly influenced by North Americans. The Teoponte guerrilla movement became active during the Ovando period (1969-1970), coinciding with that regime's move to the Right following a brief "nationalist" phase. Teoponte symbolized the commitment of many young Catholic students to socialist revolution. Though this second group was crushed (some killed, others going into exile, still others dying of hunger in the jungle), it served to radicalize the student body, to increase the social tensions in society, and to precipitate a confrontation between the right-wing military and the popular forces (mainly the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trade unions) supported by the Torres section of the military. The unsuccessful guerrilla experience and the successful massive mobilization against the fascist-coup attempts convinced revolutionary militants that the road to revolution in Bolivia lies through a combination of mass mobilization and armed struggle. "If the one hundred or so armed guerrillas had been in La Paz in October, instead of lost in the jungles, the revolution might not have stopped with Torres," a brother of one of the dead *guerrilleros* told me. The rural *foco* theory of revolutionary struggles appears to have lost all support in Bolivia today. For the student revolutionaries the problem is one of forging as many links as possible with the working class (and to a lesser degree the peasantry), arming themselves, and preparing for a decisive confrontation with the Right.

Torres: Spokesman for a Moribund "National Capitalism"

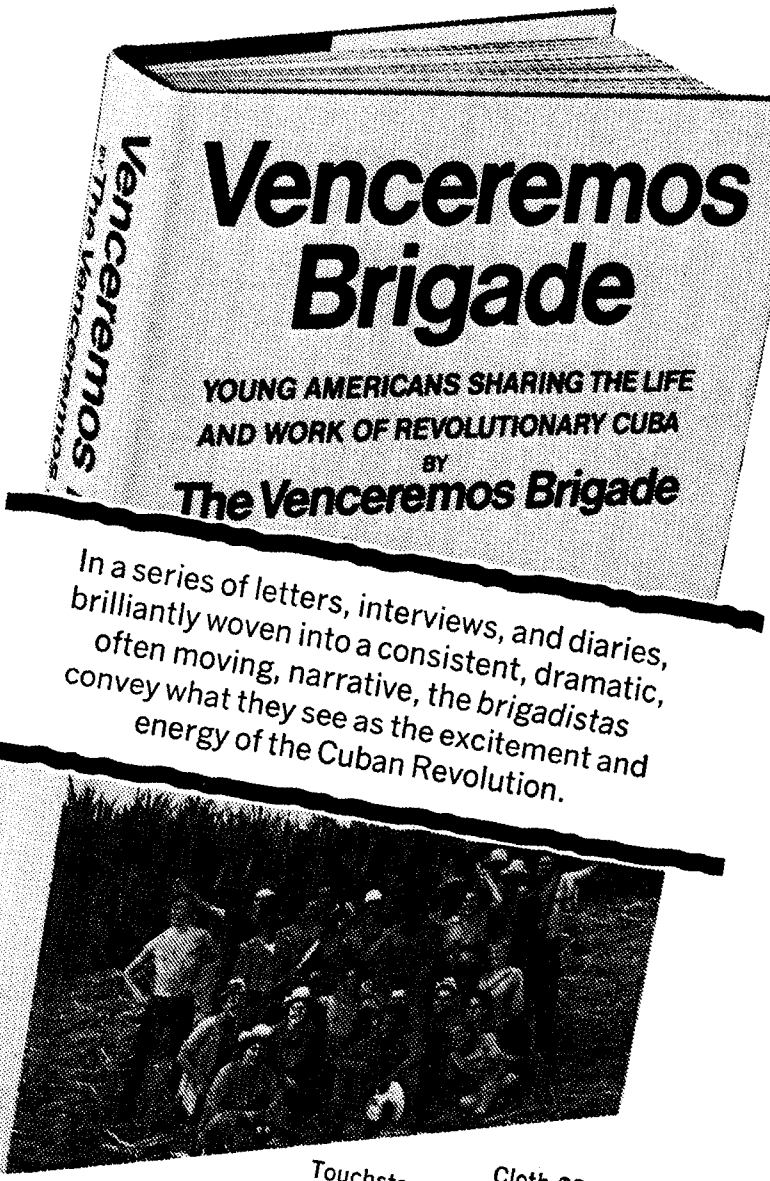
Despite his rhetoric, Torres's revolutionary nationalism is largely embedded in a perspective of economic development which depends on the national capitalists—notwithstanding the fact that these same "national" capitalists support and work with U.S. imperialism and the Bolivian military to overthrow the Torres government. Upon occasion, Torres himself has denounced this counter-revolutionary activity of the private sector, but he still believes that he can work through private entrepreneurs and win them over. His speeches on the role of Bolivian capitalists are revealing: criticism of Bolivian capitalists has so far been confined to those private-enterprise sectors which have actively supported military attempts to overthrow him. However, during a visit to an industrial plant (FORNO), Torres inadvertently revealed the bankruptcy of Bolivian capitalism. He was informed by plant management that FORNO needed state financial aid if it was to survive. Torres replied that almost all factories were at the point of bankruptcy; that all required state assistance in the form of loans, and that there was a limit on the amount of money available for loans from the Central Bank. Torres proposed that the industrialists' association (Chamber of Industries) carry out a study of the economic situation and the needs of Bolivian industry so that the government could get an idea of industrial priorities. De-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spite this pervasive and visible crisis, Torres is still tied to the "national capitalist" ideology and premises: he has affirmed that his government would "help private enterprise while it carried out its function." Despite his promises to "deepen" the revolution, Torres cannot visualize development outside of the capitalist framework. Following this path will inevitably lead Torres to embrace the demands of the private entrepreneurs for "law and order." Unable to develop Bolivia on the basis of moribund national capital, he will have to turn to foreign investors as sources of loans. The alternatives will be posed again in the near future: a private-enterprise police state or socialism. "Revolutionary nationalism" has little long-term relevance to either workers or capitalists, national or foreign, as both in their own way understand the reality of the Bolivian situation.

No one can really predict how long Torres will stay in power or the exact date when he will fall; the political situation is so fluid and the pace of change is so rapid that a single event could trigger off a set of far-reaching changes, taking all the participants more or less by surprise. Nevertheless what is clear is that Torres is sitting atop a volcano: on the one hand, a resurgent working class which is highly radicalized with solid victories in the near past and with important allies within the society; on the other hand, the military, the bourgeoisie, and the United States, threatened and capable of reacting with force, as yet unsure of the outcome but convinced that only an armed uprising will stem the tide of socialist revolution. In this political and social context the Torres variety of revolutionary nationalism has exhausted almost all of its possibilities as a renovating force. The moment will come when the two real options confront each other: either a capitalist police-state or working-class socialism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



In a series of letters, interviews, and diaries, brilliantly woven into a consistent, dramatic, often moving, narrative, the *brigadistas* convey what they see as the excitement and energy of the Cuban Revolution.

Touchstone Paperback $3.95; Cloth $8.95

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

(Advertisement)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

"FIRST, THE HEARTS OF MEN . . ."

By Keith Buchanan

The Military Art of People's War: Selected Writings of General Vo Nguyen Giap, edited and with an introduction by Russell Stetler. MR Press, 1970. 332 pp; $8.50.

Today in Indochina, as in Latin America and, in the long run, throughout the length and breadth of the Third World the basic question being posed, the question whose answer will shape the quality of life our children and our children's children will experience is: Is Man—or his machines—the decisive factor in history? To this question Vo Nguyen Giap and the Indochinese masses whose experience he distills in this volume would give an unequivocal answer—and it is in terms of the priorities laid down by a Chinese strategist two and a half millennia ago: "First, the hearts of men; secondly, supplies; thirdly, terrain; it is only in the fourth place that weapons come." The truth of this assessment has been demonstrated in our lifetime in frost-bound Leningrad and on the icy steppes before Stalingrad; in the tropical forests of Cuba and the urban slums of Rio; most decisively of all in the First and Second

Keith Buchanan is Professor of Geography at Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Indochina Wars. Yet the lesson has not been learned—for the highest military and political echelons of the world's richest and most powerful nation are still dominated by men obsessed with technology, "who put their faith more in the metals and wires that make up one of these new apparatuses than in the veins and courage which make up a man," by men who see the rest of humanity "as instruments, numbers, machines."

Giap's writings, as assembled in Russell Stetler's volume, have as their basic theme the confrontation of these two world-visions. In this volume, which deals with a whole generation of struggle in Vietnam, we are given an insight, through the eyes of one who has helped to shape the history of the twentieth century, into how it has been possible in Vietnam to "defeat material force with moral force, defeat what is strong with what is weak, defeat what is modern with what is primitive." Giap's story is the epic story of how a small and backward peasant people fought to a standstill, within less than one generation, three of the most powerful military machines of the twentieth century—those of Japan, of colonial France, and of the United States. In each case the foreign aggressor was strong technically and materially but lacked a strong social and moral base. The strength of the Vietnamese derived, in contrast, not from their wealth, from their weaponry, or their numbers but from the awareness "that in a revolutionary struggle and in war, the decisive factor is, in the last analysis, man and political lines, and that the decisive strength is that of the masses of people." Military success hinges, Giap demonstrates, on careful and painstaking political education by the Party, an education designed to give every participant in the struggle a full awareness of its military, economic, and political dimensions and of the significance of his own personal role. "To maintain and develop the determination to fight was a whole process of unremitting and patient political and ideological education and struggle." And complementing this intensive political training (the main armed force in 1944 was the Vietnam Propaganda and Liberation unit) was a careful analysis of the main contradictions of Vietnamese society—"the contradiction between the nation and imperialism on the one hand, and the contra-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

diction between the people, especially between the peasants and the feudal landlord class, on the other." This analysis paved the socialist path for the Vietnamese revolution. The contrast between the highly politicized awareness of the Vietnamese soldier or peasant and the crude anti-communism or plain bewilderment of their French or American opponents, whether top brass or ordinary soldier, and of the puppet troops explains the repeated crushing defeats the Vietnamese inflicted on even the crack units of an enemy superior in both numbers and technology.

The first section deals with the war against the French. It was a war which developed "according to the general laws of all revolutionary wars and also to the specific laws of the Vietnamese society and theatre of operations." It was a guerrilla war which integrated all aspects of struggle—military, economic and political, a war without fronts in the accepted sense: "The front was nowhere; it was everywhere." By 1954 the United States was bearing 80 percent of the costs of the French Expeditionary Force and the objective of creating a Franco-American military base had become clear to the Vietnamese. The Navarre Plan aimed at ending the war in eighteen months; it was countered by the Viet Minh's mobilization of the entire population of the "free zones," by a strategy of "accumulating thousands of small victories to turn them into a great success, thus gradually altering the balance of forces, in transforming our weakness into power and carrying off final victory." It was a strategy which confronted the French with the same basic problem the United States confronted a decade later: if they concentrated their forces to contain the enemy they had to yield terrain, while if they spread their forces to occupy terrain dispersion made them vulnerable to guerrilla attacks. The correctness of the Viet Minh's strategy was vindicated by the decisive attack on Dien Bien Phu, a post considered impregnable by both French and U.S. military men; it had been preceded by patient political work among the peasant masses designed to give them a complete understanding of the significance of the struggle and by a series of military thrusts, partly in collaboration with Laotian guerrillas, into northwest and central Laos, the Red River delta and the far South, which had the French desperately switching forces from one front to another.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"American imperialism is leading this country to disaster-at home and abroad."

In this powerful new book, Felix Greene – author, lecturer, and prize-winning film-maker – brilliantly develops that theme. He shows precisely what imperialism is . . . how America became the world's leading imperialist power . . . how it distorts our thinking . . . and why – unless we dismantle it – it will destroy us.

THE ENEMY

What Every American Should Know About Imperialism

By FELIX GREENE

Cloth $8.95; Vintage paperbound $1.95.
Now at your bookstore
RANDOM HOUSE

(Advertisement)

THE END OF WHITE WORLD SUPREMACY
FOUR SPEECHES BY MALCOLM X

Edited by Benjamin Goodman

From a review by Julius Lester in the SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"All praises are now given to the name and memory of Malcolm X. In his person he represented the apotheosis of blackness; but, except for the last 11 months of his political career, he articulated the aims and ideals of the Nation of Islam as the number one spokesman for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. This is important to remember because as the most important black political figure of the sixties, Malcolm X brought the thought of Elijah Muhammad to a larger audience and thereby increased its influence. That fact is not recognized or acknowledged today, but it is very evident in **The End of White World Supremacy,** a collection of four previously unpublished speeches given during 1962 and 1963, Malcolm's last year in the Nation. Here we find the concepts that, three years after his death, would be gathered under the rubric black power and forwarded as a secular philosophy: pride in blackness; the necessity to know black history; black separation; the need for black unity; black control of the political, economic and social institutions of the black community. . . . One reads these four speeches from almost a decade ago and trembles. He speaks not as a political leader or social analyst (though he was both), but like one of the Old Testament prophets. He is the voice of doom from the maelstrom of American history."

$6.00 (cloth) CL1699 $1.95 (paper) PB1702

Published by Merlin House, Inc. / New York
Distributed by Monthly Review Press / New York / London

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The second section of the volume deals with the war in the South. This commenced as a neocolonial war and, as Giap comments, in such a war "the vast economic and military possibilities of the metropolis" are deployed through the medium of a puppet regime. The effectiveness of this "indirect violence" is ultimately dependent on the strength of the puppet regime; from the U.S. viewpoint it was unfortunate that right from the beginning the Saigon regime lacked vitality and was weakened by the character of its social base which comprised all the reactionary elements of Vietnamese society—feudalism, landlordism and comprador bourgeoisie. Under such conditions increasing U.S. intervention became inevitable and with a rapidly growing U.S. presence the true character of the "Government of South Vietnam" and the true face of U.S. policy showed themselves increasingly clearly. It was the social weakness of the Saigon regime that explains what Giap termed "one of the striking particularities of the revolutionary war in the South . . . that it is developing simultaneously in two forms—political struggle and armed struggle—in a long period." He adds: "Political struggle plays a very fundamental role because our basic strength and the enemy basic weakness lie in the political field."

With deepening involvement in this "war without fronts," and with the demonstrated inability of the Americans to resolve those contradictions in the Southern situation which had proved the undoing of the French and of the puppet regimes which succeeded them, it was inevitable, as Giap saw in 1964, that the U.S. would strike out wildly, "like a mortally wounded beast."

Part three of the volume deals with "The War of Escalation," with the increasing build-up in the South and the attempt to cripple the North by air attacks. He notes that, like the French before them, the Americans face the double task of destroying the NLF and of "pacifying" and holding the countryside and defending their bases; 70 percent of the U.S. troops, he estimates, are tied down in defensive duties, the defense of the fifteen-mile perimeter of Da Nang alone immobilizing one division. And in his interview entitled "Their Dien Bien Phu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Will Come," he points out the impasse in which U.S. policy-makers find themselves, for they cannot withdraw without leaving behind them a stable regime and, at the same time, they cannot keep 600,000 men in Vietnam for another decade. The U.S. cannot win, he asserts, for "they figure everything in billions, billions of dollars. They don't reckon on the spirit of a people fighting for what they know is right."

Russell Stetler's anthology helps us to understand how the Vietnamese, by years of painstaking political effort, were able to mobilize this indefinable thing, this "spirit of a people fighting for what they know is right," so that a small peasant nation was able to confront and fight to a standstill the most sophisticated and barbaric military machine in history. And for other small nations who may have to face the same aggressor, the most critical phrase in the whole of Stetler's collection is found in Giap's definition of the revolutionary and military line followed: "This line is actually the Marxist-Leninist theory ingeniously *applied to the realities of Vietnam.*" (Emphasis added.) It is this careful relating of theory to the complex historical, political, and social realities of a specific environment that constitutes the essential lesson of the Vietnamese (as earlier of the Chinese) experience; the patience, the infinite patience and dedication, the humanity, and the almost superhuman endurance, of those who are reshaping Vietnamese society—and through their struggle changing the whole balance of forces in the world—shines out from every page of Giap's self-effacing account.

The last interview recorded in this volume is dated Spring 1969; in other words, two years ago. Now, it may be correct that in the early 1950s "the Americans made a big mistake in choosing South Vietnam for a battlefield" and certainly in 1966 the economic incentive to continue the struggle was small. (According to Giap, U.S. investments at that date represented barely 2 percent of the total investments in the economy of the South.) This situation, however, has drastically changed in the last year or so, as the potential significance of the Southeast Asian region as a source of low-sulphur petroleum has become

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

apparent. The region has a potential annual output equivalent to the total yearly demand of the West for oil, and U.S. financial interests are already talking of an investment in the area of some $35 billion in the next decade or so. Against this background the American-South Vietnamese invasions of Cambodia and middle Laos and the continued heavy bombing of Laos and parts of South Vietnam appear less as last desperate flings of the American military than as evidence of a renewed determination to hang on to a potentially immensely rich region. This policy can be expected to shift the critical sector of the struggle to the cities as refugees pour in from the devastated countryside. (Already three-fifths of South Vietnam's population is crammed into the urban areas.) The struggle will be further prolonged but, as Giap warns, the more violent the war becomes "the stronger and more effective the political struggle will be, particularly in the urban centers of South Vietnam." Such an urban struggle (and recent riots in the cities of the South show how close to explosion these agglomerations of misery are) may, indeed, provide the final *coup de grâce* to America's bloody adventure in Indochina for, as Giap's narrative demonstrates again and again, in the context of the Vietnamese type of war the strength of the rear is the decisive factor.

HOW NOT TO TREAT THE RAILROADS

By Robert B. Carson

The Interstate Commerce Omission, The Public Interest and the ICC, by Ralph Nader Study Group on the Interstate Commerce Commission and Transportation, Robert C. Fellmeth, project director. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970. $1.45.

Ralph Nader and his imitators, irrespective of any transient satisfactions they afford the faceless mass of "consumers," must

Robert Carson teaches economics at State University College, Oneonta, New York.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of course be understood for what they are, simply liberal reformers attempting to reconstruct capitalist society. Whatever their intentions are, their critiques of the present order, despite their shrillness and the fact that the ruling class sometimes over-reacts to them —as in the case of General Motors' shoddy attempts to discredit and impugn Nader's character—are in effect exercises in papering over the fundamental crises in the society, diverting attention from real issues, or so distorting these issues that they cannot be recognized. It is, therefore, no accident that Ralph Nader receives so much attention from the media and from government sources, that he is the "official" *bête noire* of corporate America. The reason is very simple—Nader and the modern-day heirs of Progressive Era muckraking perform the important service of helping to legitimize non-crucial dissent.

The Interstate Commerce Omission begins with a survey of the present ICC, emphasizing an examination of the Commission's membership, its political composition, the prior connections of members with the industry they regulate, their current industry associations, and the tendency of ex-commissioners to fall back into high-paid transportation industry posts after their "public" service. Next, the report takes up the matter of the financial and operational organization of public transportation, with Nader's group demonstrating one of its dominant biases—an almost instinctive dislike of corporate bigness. Then, in succession, the study examines: ICC control over competitive entry into transportation, the rate problem, highway safety, home moving, rail boxcar shortages, and the decline of rail passenger service. The evidence is carefully marshalled and interpreted to produce the desired conclusions.

The ICC, it is reported somewhat excitedly by the young Penn and Harvard law students of Director Robert Fellmeth's staff, has betrayed its own original high purpose. It has become both politically and practically integrated into the very industry it allegedly regulates. ICC members and corporate leaders of transportation are virtually interchangeable. However, even beyond this question of ethics, the ICC is basically inept. It fails to collect evidence needed for accurate financial analysis and for fair rate-setting. It does not understand the real economic relationships that exist between transportation and the other sectors of the economy; hence, regulative decisions are reached without understanding their full implications. Meanwhile, rates and costs are too high, innovation is discouraged, and service deteriorates

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the industry the ICC supposedly regulates. These are, of course, the classic textbook symptoms of an exploitive market monopoly and that is the very point the authors seek to drive home: public transportation has become essentially a monopolistic industry; and regulation, rather than opposing this development, has come to support it.

Their proposed solution to the failures of industry policy and government regulation is to abolish the ICC "in its present form" and to organize a new federal transportation agency "created from the ground up." This agency, Nader's group argues, should "remove all restrictive barriers to entry and encourage competition within the various modes of transportation," end industry rate-setting bureaus, enforce antitrust laws, and set rates and charges in clearly monopolistic markets on the basis of cost, "with marginal cost pricing where there is excess capacity." In brief, the report presumes that federally enforced creation of competition in those transport markets where competition is possible and strict regulation in others will resolve the public transportation mess. The predatory instincts of monopolization will thus be checked by enlightened government regulation, while at the same time the supposedly highly desirable elements of a competitive market situation will not be destroyed by regulative "overkill." Superficially, at least, this is very attractive stuff; examined closely, however, it becomes patent nonsense.

First of all, the Nader study misunderstands, or at least misrepresents, the historical development of the ICC, and this error positively limits the analytic possibilities of the study. The authors' depiction of the ICC as having been directed away from its original purpose of controlling a monopolistic railroad industry and ending the railroads' exploitation of consumers, shippers, and even labor is simply incorrect. Such an evaluation of the philosophy of Progressive-Era business regulation is now generally rejected by economic historians and transportation economists, whatever their special political outlooks. The ICC was, from the beginning, as it is today, an effort to create an officially sanctioned cartel controlling public surface transportation in the United States. The subsequent growth of federal regulative powers over railroads and other modes of transportation has been the logical elaboration of this principle of official cartelization. To see the Commission or the industry's development in any other way shows a phenomenal inability or unwillingness to understand modern capitalist development, and immediately shunts the study of transportation problems off into simple-minded observations about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business ethics and biography or, at best, into a narrow and myopic micro-economic analysis.

While by the mid-1880s a number of economic groups favored the creation of a federal agency to regulate the railroads, it is also clear that the railroads themselves supported such legislation. The immediately preceding decades had been marked by costly rate wars and other expensive expressions of competition triggered by both the enormous excess capacity built into the industry and the periodic tendency of the economy to tail off into financial crises and depressions. Private attempts at cartelization of railroad markets, through pools and rate and traffic bureaus, simply could not resolve these problems, partly because such actions collapsed owing to their own enforcement weaknesses and partly because other affected economic groups challenged such blatant attempts to construct private monopoly power. The railroads therefore turned to the federal government in search of support. The passage of the Commerce Act of 1887 laid the foundation, and over the next two decades additional legislation and a large body of court and ICC decisions established the principles of official cartelization for the rail industry, largely (but not exclusively) on the railroads' own terms. Indeed, the Elkins Act (1903), which ended the hated rebates, was written in the legal offices of the Pennsylvania Railroad; and even the Hepburn Act (1906), which drastically enlarged the ICC's rate maintenance and setting powers, supposedly at the expense of the rail monopolies, had considerable management support. Such developments were of course no exception to business affairs in the Progressive Era: the economic principles of the new "corporate liberalism" advocated a broader and more pragmatic use of governmental power in all market undertakings, the object being to provide rational order and stability in an increasingly chaotic economy. Indeed, these new uses of governmental power were broadly understood by American corporate and political leaders as the only way to preserve capitalist values and private property relations in the emerging structure of monopoly capitalism.

The early legislation creating and enlarging ICC power, however, did not immediately bring all of the expected benefits of a protected cartel. While railroads could point to the official acceptance of a general policy of cartel pricing, in fact the industry still remained troubled by inter-firm competition and jealousy. Railroads, chiefly through the inspiration of J. P. Morgan, then turned to community-of-interest and other devices for formally integrating rail properties under the leadership of a few

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dominant and cooperating firms. The railroads correctly understood that this strengthening of monopoly power was essential to making an official cartelization policy work. Although they were initially frustrated, the railroads emerged from the First World War—after an ignominious operational collapse and more than two years of government control—with the Esch-Cummins or Transportation Act of 1920. This legislation established specifically what had only been suggested in theory by the earlier enactments. Under this act, the principle of intra-industry competition was essentially abandoned by the Congressional charge to the ICC that the rail network of the nation be consolidated into a limited number of systems. The industry won federal approval for the idea of guaranteeing a "fair" return (6 percent) on investment in rate-setting procedures, and the old ambition of industry pooling and rate bureaus was given official encouragement. Also, the 1920 Act removed regulative powers over finances and abandonments from troublesome state railroad commissions and gave these powers to the ICC.

The railroads, however, failed to make good on the consolidation stipulations of the 1920 Act, partly because the ICC pursued a half-hearted effort to "preserve competition" in any general merger plan, and partly because the general business boom deflected corporate interest from the old problems of excess capacity and excessive competition. At any rate, the general collapse of the 1930s resurrected the problem of forging more effective cartel controls. In 1933, at FDR's insistence, the ICC extended the courtesy of officially recognizing the Association of American Railroads as the single, industry-wide policy-making body, with all of its powers as a lobbyist and a tool for enabling collusion and cooperation in the making of corporate decisions. Traffic bureaus and pools operated by the AAR were given ICC sanction, and the Commission and Congress were moved by the Association's lobbying to accept regulation of the railroads' new competition, the hated buses and trucks. In 1935, most of commercial motor vehicle transportation was placed under ICC control, and finally in 1940, with the passage of a new Transportation Act, the federal government acceded to the AAR's pressure to end any pretense of maintaining "costly competition," either between railroads or between competing modes of transport. The ICC thus became committed to an inefficient "umbrella" pricing system which the railroads, despite their later opposition to such rate-setting policies, had succeeded in bringing about. Meanwhile, the rail industry pressed for preferential treatment for itself and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

succeeded in 1948 in obtaining exemptions from antitrust enforcement.

None of these legislative successes, however, could insulate the railroads from the growing problems of competition from other forms of transport and from structural and demand dislocations that persistently tore at railroad balance sheets through the 1950s and 1960s. Even the hastily drawn Transportation Act of 1958, which took away the last effective regulatory power of the states over passenger trains, and the ICC's growing willingness to approve virtually any kind of merger or abandonment could not halt the steady decline. Nevertheless, it must be understood that the railroads had initiated and successfully pursued a policy of establishing themselves as a protected cartel. Clearly, they were not always free to undertake *whatever* was in their own interest, but the official commitment to maintaining the railroads as a privately owned industry had loaded railroad legislation and regulation in their favor. The industry had to be kept going and on its own terms. For the society, this translated into higher-cost transportation as the ICC and the Congress always tended to look at the balance sheets of railroads and other transportation modes first and then at questions of efficiency and service. More important, it has meant the real reduction of public transportation service and the prospective deterioration of what remains.

By incorrectly representing the history of government-transportation relations, or by not studying it at all, the Nader Report deceives its readers. The present railroad crisis and the growing irrationality of the whole public transportation system are not seen as systemic and therefore basic to the organization of American monopoly capitalism. Instead, it is a matter of individual leadership, or bad corporate decision-making, or inept government. Having created such a superficial and false understanding of the problem, the authors can easily move to the proposed solution of establishing "managed competition" in transport markets. The fact that such a policy is a logical impossibility and cannot be supported either by economic analysis or by political reality is never understood. The report blithely argues that the existence of a new super-regulatory agency would produce pricing and output decisions for privately owned and operated transport companies which would both best serve the public interest and at the same time return sufficient profits to maintain private operation. Americans would thus be presented with the best of both worlds—the general benefits of social planning and the alleged efficiency of private enterprise. Quite confidently, Ralph

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nader assures us that we shall be able to have our cake and eat it too.

The report, however, is itself unsure about how to pursue simultaneously a profit-directed and a public interest-oriented transportation policy. In the cases of the current box-car shortage and passenger train discontinuance, Nader's Raiders would virtually abandon business profits altogether in favor of directing railroads to undertake policies clearly not in their own economic interest, namely the supplying of services which have little likelihood of ever earning a return equal to cost and which would have to be major subtractions from income earned elsewhere. These cases, moreover, are not really exceptions appropriate only for railroads, since efforts to maximize public interest considerations in transportation would invariably mean imposing similar "uneconomic" burdens on trucks and buses too. Ultimately, even under Nader's managed competition scheme, non-market allocative decisions must be made throughout the field of public transportation with regard to quality and frequency of service, pricing that service, and allocating investment between alternative types of service.

Nowhere does the report consider the present technique of separating the nation's transportation problem into its public (commercial carrier) and its private (family car) components. The problem of balancing resource allocation between the auto and commercial carriers of people and goods could not possibly be dealt with by the regulatory machinery that Nader proposes. Thus, the crisis of dwindling public transportation and the insanity of the automobile culture, with its attendant noise and air pollution, urban congestion, and inexorable conquest by concrete and asphalt of open space, would still be as far from human control as they are now.

If the Nader study is so obviously misconceived, why then is it worth discussing at all?

In the first place, as noted at the outset, Ralph Nader has a large and increasingly alert audience. Second, while his proposed "recommendations" in no way offer solutions to the industry's present or future economic problems, they do divert attention from that old bugaboo of nationalization or social ownership of transport facilities, an idea that has been whispered about even outside of economics seminar rooms since the Penn Central collapse. Third, with the real issues thus set aside, the industry is free to propose its own solutions to the railroad dilemma and to problems in other areas of public transportation. In the case of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

railroads, these will surely include acceleration of the merger process and massive abandonments of non-profitable services and lines, probably cutting the rail network to a few dozen inter-metropolitan routes. Meanwhile, railroads will be willing to bargain with the ICC and state governments for "service at cost" or "cost-plus" contracts for operating specific low-profit or loss-producing passenger, commuter, or freight operations. The recently formed National Railroad Passenger Corporation is a specific step in this direction; creating the illusion of a "nationalized" service, it is in reality a subsidy to private rail operations. Or they may simply seek to unload these capital-starved loss-producers on state and local governments at inflated prices, as in the Pennsylvania's sale of the Long Island Railroad to New York State. There is also the possibility of calling upon the old technique of tapping the federal government for large loans or grants on the pretext of national defense considerations or under the threat of bankruptcy. While this device failed at the time of the Penn Central collapse, the powerful lobbying efforts of the Association of American Railroads in this direction should not be underestimated.

For the railroads, the long-run prospect of public ownership might ultimately become attractive, although there is certainly no present sentiment for this among rail or financial leaders. If abandonments, "service at cost" proposals, and direct subsidies prove incapable of heading off financial collapse, nationalization—if it were to mean sufficient compensation to the security holders—might even be sought. With a total capitalization and long-term debt of about $30 billion, railroad owners may well see nationalization as a painless way to convert a large portion of their sunk capital into cash at public expense. Indeed, railroads may be a model for such an aberrant development in late monopoly capitalism which socialists should anticipate and oppose. Such a proposal would after all be the logical economic conclusion for an officially cartelized private industry facing irretrievably dwindling returns.

What is happening in the transportation industry generally, and with railroads in particular, must be a special concern for socialists and not be shrugged off indifferently as simply another example of capitalist crisis. Transportation is certainly the weakest sector of the domestic American economy. Here is a perfectly clear example of the contradictions of private and public interest. Beyond this, the transportation crisis is also linked to the environmental issue and the problem of the social and economic impact of technological change on jobs. The growing irrationality of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transportation, both in the areas of commercial hauling and private auto use, necessarily provides socialists with an opportunity to set out their own ideas about the social allocation of resources and the interpenetration of economic activity and life style. While American capitalism will not fall simply because the Penn Central flounders, or the rail network contracts to a shadow of its previous size, or highway congestion worsens, the effect of these developments is clearly to heighten consciousness of the blatant failures of capitalist society. The effect of *The Interstate Commerce Omission* and its imitations, which will surely follow, is to funnel off this consciousness into diversionary and pointless paths, to desensitize it to the real economic issues involved, and to evade recognition of the need and the possibilities for a socialist America.

AMERICAN LABOR AND FOREIGN POLICY

By Melvyn Dubofsky

American Labor and United States Foreign Policy: The Cold War in the Unions from Gompers to Lovestone by Ronald Radosh. New York: Random House, 1970. 463 pp.

In what today seems to have been an eternity ago, C. Wright Mills looked to America's labor leaders to halt the drift toward militarism and the garrison society. Writing in 1948 he observed of the men who then led America's trade unions: "They lead the only organizations capable of stopping the main drift towards war and slump. . . . What the labor

Melvyn Dubofsky teaches history at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leader does, or fails to do, may be the key to what will happen in the United States."*

Since those lines were written we have seen what happened, and the part played by American labor leaders and their unions. The Cold War intensified, militarism ran amok, and corporatism blighted American society, with American unions enthusiastically participating in the process. Mills's dream of a social democratic labor movement that would reshape domestic society and usher in an era of international peace dissolved as completely, if not as suddenly, as the earlier illusion that international socialism could stop the drift to war among the European powers in 1914.

In *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy,* Ronald Radosh explains why the labor movement failed to fulfill Mills's prophecy. Radosh tells a simple tale of how American labor leaders involved themselves in foreign affairs and how, almost without exception, they served government policy-makers in the diplomacy of the First World War, the later containment of revolutionary movements in the Third World, and the struggle against "international communism." His description of the involvement of Samuel Gompers in the wartime diplomacy of Woodrow Wilson, his account of the activities of such labor fakirs as Jay Lovestone, Serafino Romualdi, and Irving Brown, and his pungent comments on the foreign-policy conceptions of George Meany leave little to be desired. We can now see precisely how American labor became a servant of power in the foreign-policy arena and the uses to which the American government put it overseas.

In describing the reactionary role of American labor in foreign affairs, Radosh has served us well. But his book unfortunately leaves too many questions unanswered, and some not even asked. Lest the comments and criticism that follow be misconstrued, let me hasten to emphasize that I have no quarrel to pick with Radosh's work. What he has chosen to do, he has done exceedingly well. The substantial nature of his contribution notwithstanding, I want to raise questions about the relationship between labor and foreign affairs that Radosh neglects.

* C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders,* (New York, 1948), p. 3.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After all, it is only because of what he has produced that we can ask questions that go beyond his findings.

The book's failings are of several sorts. Of the period between 1920 and 1941, when left-wing influences in the trade unions were most pronounced, Radosh tells us little of labor and foreign policy. Moreover, in analyzing American diplomacy and labor's part in serving it—certainly not in making it—Radosh follows an analytical path already well worn by Arno Mayer, Gordon Levin, and Gabriel Kolko.* To their more complete and detailed treatments of the anti-revolutionary and anti-Bolshevik aims of American policy, Radosh adds information about labor's role in the anti-revolutionary coalition initially built by Woodrow Wilson.

Much more serious is Radosh's tendency to equate a handful of labor leaders with the whole labor movement. And this in turn is the result of an even more serious failing: his neglect of the domestic dimensions of the labor movement. One can scarcely begin to comprehend the shifting relationship between workers and the state without knowledge about how the First and Second World Wars altered the structure and composition of the labor force, transformed workers' material and psychic expectations, and hence unloosed a whole constellation of new forces.

Of no country was this truer than of the United States. The world wars of the twentieth century thrust American workers into the heart of imperialism. After the first war, America replaced Britain as the world's banker and senior trading partner, reaping the profits that fed the "Golden Glow" of the 1920s and that bought off substantial numbers of workers with relatively high wages. After the second war, America, alone among non-socialist nations, dominated global economic relationships, the profits from which again, to use Lenin's word, "corrupted" the working class. As Lenin truly remarked, the imperialist ideology had penetrated the working class.**

---

* Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking, 1918-1919*, (New York, 1967); N. Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics*, (New York, 1968); Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War, 1943-1945*, (New York, 1968).

** V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest State of Capitalism*, (New York, 1939), p. 109.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is precisely the relationship between changing domestic economic conditions and the ego needs of trade-union officials that motivated American labor leaders to serve the nation's foreign-policy makers. One must realize that the labor leaders whom Radosh is most concerned with—Gompers, Meany, Brown, Lovestone, Romualdi—held or hold symbolic positions; they control no working-class economic organizations, lack the power to bring workers out on strike and, as a result, miss a labor leader's most gratifying experience: to sit across the bargaining table from, and temporarily be treated as an equal by, the rulers of American society. Devoid of objective economic power, solely the public-relations men or image-makers for the effective wielders of trade-union power—who did not always exert their power in ways sanctioned by the ruling class—the Gomperses and Meanys were truly divorced from the mass of trade-union members, who are more concerned with domestic economic factors than with foreign affairs. The unconcern most trade unionists evince for foreign affairs, an apathy rarely modified by their fundamental acceptance of imperialist ideology, allows the Gomperses and Meanys a free and unchallenged field to satisfy their egos in foreign policy. Here, too, it must be stressed that the role played by such labor leaders is more symbolic than real, more rhetorical than operational. Others made the policies, established their parameters, and executed the presidentially ordained American objectives; labor leaders merely floated about the fringes as presidential window dressing, intended to demonstrate to other nations that American foreign policy represented a national consensus.

Why did labor leaders accept such a subservient, even obsequious, role? Radosh puts his finger directly on the reason when he cites a report by an American official concerning Gompers's wartime visit to Italy: "His [Gompers's] vanity . . . seemed to come out, and while here he was apparently much more concerned with ambassadorial luncheons, ministerial meetings and an official and aristocratic reception in the capital than with anything else."* Whatever may have been the surface appearance of Gompers's wartime diplomacy, he was in

* Radosh, p. 181.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Europe neither to make policy nor to execute it. No! He went overseas to satisfy his own ego and to build an image that would serve him well in American affairs. Only a labor leader concerned primarily with image-building for a nonworking-class constituency would have proclaimed to an American audience in 1919 upon his return from overseas: "America is the apotheosis of all that is right."*

While Gompers and his labor brethren used the war emergency to build their own egos, other labor leaders engaged in the real material struggles that waxed and waned on the home front. More aware of the needs and desires of their followers, these leaders, on the one hand, exercised the real economic power their organizations possessed in a wartime market of tight labor and high profits to pressure private employers and public officials to sanction union growth and to increase wages. Always, of course, they were aware of precisely how far they could pursue their pressure tactics before bringing down upon themselves and their followers the full wrath of government, as the experience of the IWW in the copper-mining and lumber industries of 1917-1918 illustrated.** On the other hand, public officials and private employers treated union officials in a new and flattering manner; men previously considered to be social upstarts and agitators were accorded the status of symbolic equals. This was true of labor leaders in all belligerent countries. Listen to Lloyd George on English labor leaders: ". . . those stalwart artisans leaning against and sitting on the steps of the throne of the dead Queen, and on *equal terms* negotiating conditions with the government of the day upon a question vitally affecting the conduct of a great war. Queen Anne was indeed dead."***

A new status for labor leaders and an improved standard of living for their followers earned for most belligerent nations the wartime loyalty of their working classes. American labor remained loyal to those in power longer than its European

---

* *Ibid.*

** See my own *We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW* (Chicago: 1969), chaps. 14-16.

*** Cited in Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism,* (London, 1956), p. 152.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

counterparts, not because American labor leaders were uniquely class collaborationists, as Radosh asserts (p. 184), but because American workers suffered less from the conflict than their war-weary European brothers and because the objective economic conditions of the postwar world promised American workers a singularly high, imperialistically-derived standard of living. Wartime labor-government cooperation was a two-way avenue, not a one-way street, as long as public officials inched down the other side of the road toward labor; when government failed to meet labor's demands, trade unions began to back away from their part in the wartime coalition.

Radosh's concentration on the overseas adventures of American labor leaders to the exclusion of their domestic activities masks the tensions among workers, employers, and government that in fact developed during the war and exploded violently in 1919. The war brought previously excluded and demoralized workers—recent immigrants, Western migratories, and blacks among others—to a level of citizenship and a consciousness of their role in society new and stimulating. But when the war ended suddenly in November 1918, the desires stimulated among masses of workers had not been satisfied. The result was an explosion of discontent from below. For almost four years, 1919-1923, steelworkers,* coal miners, railroad men, machinists, longshoremen (including some in Seattle who in 1919 refused to load cargo for White Russian troops in Siberia), even cops, and members of the singularly conservative United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners walked off the job, suffered, and struggled long and militantly to maintain conditions won during the war and also to obtain the higher place in society promised them for their contribution to the war effort but never delivered.

Gompers might wander the boulevards of Paris and the halls of Versailles in 1919, but thousands of steelworkers fought in the streets of Homestead, Johnstown, Youngstown, Gary, and South Chicago. Their defeat, as well as the later subjugation of coal miners, railwaymen, and machinists, by the full power of corporate capitalism, abetted by a neutral or active govern-

* For an excellent account of what the war meant to immigrant steelworkers see David Brody, *Steelworkers in America,* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), chaps. 9-10.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment, meant more for the future shape and direction of the American labor movement than the diplomatic obscenities of Samuel Gompers. By the time this turmoil had been contained in 1923, the United States had established a form of economic imperialism that until 1929 effectively paid off American workers in high wages, Model-T Fords, and newfangled radios.

Unfortunately Radosh neither describes nor analyzes what happened to the foreign policy of American labor leaders after 1929 when the economic system failed. And I don't mean the foreign-policy attitudes of William Green and the other old men of the AFL whose images of domestic and also overseas reality had been formed beyond revision in the days of Gompers. What we need to know is how such leaders as Harry Bridges, Joseph Curran, Walter Reuther, Julius Emspak, and Michael Quill, to name but a few of the newer and younger labor leaders of the 1930s, perceived the world and the American labor movement's role in it.

By the time Radosh resumes his account in 1946-1947, the fruits of economic imperialism were once again available to a consumer-oriented postwar working class. First brought into the economy and higher wages by war, maintained in their job security and wages by the Cold-War military machine, and fed the crumbs of America's multinational corporate empire, is it any wonder that the nation's workers, by and large, joined in the celebration of the "American Century" and waged the Cold War as ferociously as any element in society? Or that they allowed Meany and Lovestone to indulge their peculiar diplomatic intrigues and fantasies?

Meany, Lovestone, et al. did indeed mislead American workers, but they led a more than willing flock of sheep to the diplomatic slaughter. So, to suggest as Mills did in 1948 or as Radosh does today, that the American labor movement might have stayed or altered the drift of American foreign policy is to indulge in flights of fancy. Whatever Meany, Lovestone, Romualdi, and Brown did or did not do overseas, France, Italy, and West Germany would have remained non-Communist; Arbenz would have been deposed in Guatemala; Jagan would have been attacked by Anglo-American interests; and anti-Communist and counterinsurgent labor leaders would have re-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceived American support everywhere south of the border. The prospects for revolution, peaceful or otherwise, or the reform of other societies, depended upon the disposition of American military muscle and economic power, *not* the antics of our labor leaders. That is not to say that labor leaders serve the working class by collaborating with the "cold warriors" in government—it is merely to underline their impotence.

Yet, despite the much proclaimed patriotism of the American working class, domestic economic developments still lead to tensions among labor, employers, and government. Workers think nothing of laying down their tools in plants vital to the war effort when their pocketbooks tell them that they are being had. Construction workers, who beat up kids in defense of their president and his flag, scarcely blink when they disregard presidential requests and duly processed court orders to admit blacks to their unions—the same blacks whose sons and brothers are dying for the flag in Vietnam.

It is the domestic situation that sowed the seeds of the foreign-policy conflict between Reuther (and labor leaders like him) and Meany, a conflict whose roots Radosh unfortunately misconstrues in his insistence that Reuther and Meany agreed on essentials. The conflict between Reuther and Meany was between men who stood in a different relationship to American society and the working class. Meany, like Gompers before him, was divorced by institutional distance from the dues-paying union members. Reuther, despite the mythology about the gap between union leaders and their followers, regularly had to evaluate what his rank and file thought, wanted, and would struggle for. Concerned with what war and imperialism did to workers and their communities (Reuther endured Detroit 1967; Meany enjoyed suburban Virginia), Reuther could not help but begin to diverge from the Cold War patterns of labor-diplomacy. For him the battle to build a better America, a struggle shared by more and more of the young and black workers he must have encountered (recall the DRUM-beats in Detroit by the militant blacks within the UAW), had to become more important than slaying red monsters abroad.

Now that Radosh has described for us the folly and moral disgrace of American labor's (or at least those who allege to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

represent it) behavior overseas, where do we go from here? Obviously old myths must be replaced by new realities. And we can only discover reality by examining the behavior of workers in their factories and communities, not by further exploring labor's covert foreign activities or its vile anti-Communist rhetoric. What hope we have for new directions in the labor movement lies in the words of former English labor leader, syndicalist, and Communist, Tom Mann: "The real worker for the people is the man who is changing their habits and thoughts, and he must work amongst the rank and file." Since Radosh has told us what a humbug Gompers was and Meany is, it is time to forget them and to carry a different anti-imperialist message to the rank and file, whose behavior in the election of 1970, misguided as it may have been, shows that they can still distinguish between the rhetorical symbols of their deep frustration and the objective social and economic factors that frustrate them.

I would like to subscribe to

MONTHLY REVIEW

Special sub rates to students: $5 (foreign $6) £ 2.25

☐ 1 year $7 (foreign $8) £ 3 ☐ 2 years $12 (foreign $14) £ 5

Monthly Review Press
116 West 14th Street
New York, N. Y. 10011

I enclose $.....

Monthly Review Press
33/37 Moreland Street
London, E.C. 1, England

I enclose £.....

Please send me MONTHLY REVIEW for
☐ two years
☐ one year

Name .....

Address .....

.....

(Canadian readers: if you pay in Canadian currency, please add 10 percent.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

MURDERERS VS. MURDERED: WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Today, all over the United States, millions of people of all colors, all classes, and from all ethnic groups are rallying to the defense of Lt. William Calley, the cold-blooded murderer of helpless women, children, babies, and old men at Mylai. Spearheaded by the most rabid and racist supporters of the Vietnam War, the mounting "Free Calley" hysteria is sweeping into its ranks many who willfully delude themselves that, by defending Calley, they are defending a helpless individual against the Establishment when, in fact, they are helping to make a hero out of a Hitler.

Lieutenant Calley is guilty of mass murder. By his own admission he shot down in cold blood countless Vietnamese women, babies, and old people. He did not shoot them down thoughtlessly or when he was "out of his mind." He "wasted" them coldly and consciously, and he did so because he considered them to be not human beings but just "gooks." For such a heinous crime there can be no excuse.

Of course, Calley was not the only one involved in the massacre at Mylai, and of course Mylai is not the only place where U.S. servicemen have massacred Indochinese. But let us at least start with Lt. Calley and Mylai, and then ferret out and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law everyone else who participated at Mylai, who ordered it, who covered up for it, and all those who were directly and indirectly responsible for it—from Sergeant Mitchell and Captain Medina up to the Pentagon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let the American people for the first time begin to reverse this country's shameful and disastrous record of compromising principles, evading responsibility, and passing the buck, which has characterized it through four hundred years of massacring Indians, enslaving and lynching blacks, and now napalming and shooting down Asian civilians in cold blood!

In order to evade the fundamental issue that the Mylai massacre was a crime against all humanity, Calley's supporters are saying that Calley was only following orders, or that "in war anything goes," *or* that others have also committed crimes as bad as or worse than Calley's.

There is no question that many of Calley's most rabid supporters have committed crimes as bad as or worse than those of Calley—not only in Vietnam but right here in the United States. But at the bottom of this argument is the real truth—that most people in the U.S. believe the life of one American white man is worth more than that of countless nonwhites. In the same way that the U.S. government, from its very beginning, wrote into law that the black man was only four-fifths of a man, in order to justify white superiority and racism and white rule, today the racist population of the U.S. is rallying to the support of this one white man because deep in their hearts they are convinced that the life of one white murderer is more precious than that of 102 murdered Asians.

The torture, the murder, the napalming, the saturation bombing of Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians in Indochina are very similar to the historic treatment of blacks in this country. Millions of Americans justifying the slaughter by U.S. servicemen of unarmed Vietnamese men, women, children, and babies are reminiscent of the 10,000 white men, women, and children who in 1916 dragged nineteen-year-old Jesse Washington through the streets of Waco, Texas, stabbing, mutilating, and finally not only burning his body but selling parts of it as souvenirs. "His teeth brought $5.00 apiece and the chain that bound his body 25¢ a link!" Calling the Vietnamese "gooks" parallels the historic reference to nonwhites in this country as "niggers," "chinks," "savages," "Japs," "spics," and "wetbacks." In this way, white Americans have dehumanized nonwhites in their minds so that they could kill them without

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accepting any of the guilt or punishment that goes with murder.

Those who claim that Calley cannot be judged because this was war are only trying to avoid admitting that the Vietnam war itself is one of the worst crimes that has ever been perpetrated against humanity, a crime which, in its monstrosity and atrocities, can only be compared to the extermination of the Indians, the enslavement and lynching of blacks, and the gassing of millions of Jews. Those who want to put all the blame on the system while exonerating Calley are in fact only trying to whitewash their own evasion of their human responsibility to resist the system. Those who fancy that by encouraging or condoning popular support for Calley they are raising the mass political consciousness of the system are in fact actually working to undermine the concrete struggles of those who have resisted or are thinking of resisting the system.

The people of this country have too long accepted and lived by a double standard in regard to crimes against nonwhite people. History will not continue to absolve us for our compromise and evasion of principle. Already there are too many among us who are graduates of this kind of bestiality.

We recognize that many veterans of the Vietnam war, black and white, are reluctant to admit that Calley is a murderer because to do so is to admit that they too have been murderers. But this is now a historic fact recognized by the entire world. The point is to start *right now* to put our principles on the line, by repudiating Calley and all those who participated in the massacre at Mylai, white and nonwhite. By doing so, we encourage all those who are trying to summon up the courage to resist participation in the U.S. crime against humanity in Indochina.

In issuing this proclamation, we recognize that those most responsible for the Mylai massacre and other crimes against humanity in Indochina cannot be brought to justice until the revolutionary social forces have achieved the power to do this. But by starting with Calley and those who participated directly in the Mylai massacre, we serve notice of what the future holds in store for all who transgress against the cause of mankind's liberation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We call upon black people and other people of color particularly who have felt the wrath and cruelty of this kind of barbarism to take their stand with the advancement of humanity and with the four-fifths of mankind who are people of color.

We call upon everybody, regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin, to do the same. We urge you to take this proclamation to your organizations, to your churches, classes, fraternal groups, political clubs, neighborhood committees, asking them to discuss and adopt it. We urge you to distribute it as widely as possible, to your representatives in City, State, and Federal government, to your friends, your relatives, your neighbors, your co-workers.

Repudiate Calley and all those who participated in the Mylai massacre!!!

Start a new page in the history of the United States—begin now to accept responsibility!!!

Committee for Political Development, All-African Peoples Union, Dan Aldridge; Afro-American Committee Against Racist Wars, James Boggs

April 3, 1971
Detroit, Michigan

THE POLISH ECONOMY

Since you cited ("Lessons of Poland," MR, February 1971, p. 3) my belief that, relatively speaking, farmers have been the principal beneficiaries of socialism in Eastern Europe, including Poland, perhaps you might also be interested in my impressions of the Polish economy and its problems, as obtained from travels covering most of Poland in the summer of 1970.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No two cities in Poland could appear to be more different than Gdansk and Szczecin, both of which were added to post-war Poland as a result of the Potsdam Agreement. Although each is a busy port city, Gdansk is clearly a showplace of post-war Polish reconstruction, while Szczecin seems to be at least ten years behind the rest of Poland in terms of rebuilding the damages inflicted during the Second World War. Apparently the Polish investment priorities for this area were considerably lower, due no doubt to the somewhat tenuous nature of the adjacent Oder-Niesse border, at least until the signing of the recent treaty with West Germany.

Polish industrialization is generally impressive, particularly in the major Silesian cities of Wroclaw and Katowice. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that during the past two decades, the growth of Polish industrial production has outpaced that of both the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia. The total output of Polish electric power and steel, for example, has more than quadrupled during this period.

As noted in your Review of the Month, the agricultural areas (which are predominantly cultivated as private farms) look very prosperous, though certainly no more so than those in the other Eastern European countries, where collectivization of agriculture prevails. Two-story farm homes abound, although one suspects that part of the impressive private agricultural construction is financed by at least one member of the family working in nearby industrial plants. Clearly there has been a significant closing of the traditional gap between rural and urban levels of living.

While private farming (and jobs in newly constructed industrial plants nearby) has brought some measure of prosperity to Polish farmers, it seems to be holding back agricultural productivity, especially in animal husbandry. According to a detailed study by Gregor Lazarcik, published by the U.S. Congressional Joint Economic Committee, the annual percentage increases in the production and productivity of animal products in the Eastern European countries were as follows between 1960-1962 and 1965-1967:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

	Production (%)	*Productivity* (%)
Bulgaria	4.7	9.4
German Democratic Republic	4.6	5.7
Rumania	3.8	6.2
Hungary	3.2	7.2
Czechoslovakia	2.8	5.0
Poland	1.6	2.5

It is certainly true that the premature experience of Poland with collectivization in the early fifties was a complete failure. But Poland's next-door neighbor, the German Democratic Republic, where collectivization was delayed until the sixties, has achieved considerable agricultural success. In my view, Polish industrialization has now proceeded to the point where the acceleration of collectivization is no longer a risk. Rather it would appear to be a necessity in order to overcome the chronic meat shortages in urban areas.

While Polish meat consumption of 52.8 kilograms per capita annually is up sharply from 36.5 kilograms in 1950—and is about the same as that of Hungary and above that of the Soviet Union—it seems likely that Polish farmers are consuming more than their proportionate share. Thus, the lowering of prices on consumer durables was no doubt intended to tempt Polish farmers to reduce their domestic meat consumption in order to purchase the products of industry, thereby increasing the available meat marketed in the cities.

By attempting to increase the prices of commodities which are in short supply and decreasing prices of items in ample supply, the Polish planners were simply following orthodox economic principles which have been advocated by the architects of the New Economic Reforms introduced all over Eastern Europe.

Eastern Europe does not seem to have any particular generalized problem of inflation—largely, in my view, due to the adherence to strict wage-productivity guidelines. In fact, in the first months of this year, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union have each announced significant price reductions. However, like capitalist countries, they are subject to pressures for changes in relative

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prices reflecting varying income elasticities of demand and changes in relative costs and supply. With rising levels of living, meat in particular seems to have a very high income elasticity of demand and unless the government can bring about corresponding increases in the productivity of animal husbandry or changes in the composition of foreign trade (such as smaller exports or larger imports of meat), there will inevitably be meat shortages arising in the urban distribution system.

In the capitalist system similar forces have been reflected in a steadily rising general price level. Up to now, in the non-capitalist system, prices have been fixed for periods as long as a decade and then have gone up by 20 to 25 percent overnight. Obviously annual price increases of smaller amounts might be one answer to this inherently explosive situation, which had a precedent in the Soviet Union itself in 1961.

One can only wonder what the result of the rescinding of the price increases by the Gierek government will be. Unless there is some dramatic change in foreign trade flows (more imports and fewer exports of meat, etc.) it would seem that the initial impact would simply be longer queues or smaller inventories.

Lynn Turgeon

New York City
March 1971

THE CAMPAIGNER

Quarterly Theoretical Journal of the National Caucus of Labor Committees

Special labor issue now on sale includes: The Left and the Newark Teachers Strike; History and Analysis of the Baltimore Strike Support Coalition; The Mass Strike and the Labor Movement; From Revolution to Reuther—a History of the UAW; Trade Unions Today.

Rates: 6 issues, $4; 4 issues, $2.50; single copy, 75¢

Write: **The Campaigner**
Box 49, Washington Bridge Station
New York, N. Y. 10033

(Advertisement)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A SONG OF PEACE

BY DAVID FERNÁNDEZ

Perhaps once
at the foot of the orange trees of pink California,
robbed by your grandfather from other grandfathers,
you dreamt of becoming president
of your nation, or only of
becoming an honest citizen.
Perhaps that was the dream
with which your greatgrandfather ran away
from far-off Italy
and thus established family and house and new hopes
in the new land of promise of the North American.

(I am only guessing, I am only
turning the pages of your possible history,
only inventing, approximately,
what you will never be because the land
of promise dug your tomb far,
very far from the orange groves.)

Perhaps you never
knew of that place in the world
that is called Vietnam,
where now you are dying daily,

David Fernández is a young Cuban poet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where your interrupted infancy loses
every logical sense, where
—I know why and you don't—
you grip a rifle that is no longer a toy,
and against you are fighting the shadows and the trees
and the winds and the roads and the stones and the smoke
from your own blazes and the silence
of a forest that is not yours nor will it be and the water
and the heat and the rain and—of course—the bullets
that you yourself brought, now turned against you.

Perhaps you never thought it could happen
this that is not a dream,
this that breaks
something inside you, this that devastates
the orange trees that grandfather planted
far away, there
where perhaps you would want
to be with friends in the shade
of a song of peace,
because this is already too much for you who know
why this song of peace
was interrupted here,
by the passing of others like you, who came
to destroy the houses, the families, the new hopes of this nation
that is called Vietnam,
of which perhaps you never heard until that sad day
when they sent you, together with your friends,
without telling you why,
to these lands where now,
under the same weapons that you brought,
you die, you die, daily, irrevocably, you die.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You can build a socialist library at half-price

by joining

MONTHLY REVIEW ASSOCIATES

Membership entitles you to:

- *A discount of 50% off the list price* of any MR Press book. A $12 book for $6 or a $5 book for $2.50 represents a considerable saving—enough to enable you to buy twice as many books. Members may purchase one copy only of every title.
- A one-year subscription to MONTHLY REVIEW (if you are already a subscriber we renew your sub automatically).
- A copy of *India Independent* by Charles Bettelheim. This indispensable analytical study of contemporary India covers agriculture, the social, economic, and class structure, the caste system, five-year plans, foreign economic relations, and many other aspects of Indian life. Its list price is $11.50. It will be sent to you FREE with your membership card.

Help MR Press become an effective press of the Left; help the magazine extend its influence, and help yourself to some important books by joining the Associates now.

Monthly Review Associates 116 W. 14th St. N. Y., N. Y. 10011

I enclose $..... Please enroll me as an MR Associate.

Check category below

☐	$ 20 - $49	Supporting Associate
☐	$ 50 - $99	Sustaining Associate
☐	$100 and over	Foundation Associate

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Please make check payable to Monthly Review Associates

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

Ping Pong and Personality

Taiwan (Formosa) has been under U.S. military control since 1950. Historically, Taiwan was part of China until it was grabbed off militarily by Japan and incorporated into the Japanese Empire. Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945 and the outbreak of war in Korea, five years later, provided an excuse for converting the island into a U.S. protectorate and announcing a blockade of the People's Republic of China which has remained in effect for two decades.

Under the blockade policy, any U.S. citizen who dealt with China was "trading with the enemy." Americans who went there despite the State Department ban lost their passports. American firms who imported pig's bristles made in China were heavily fined for so doing. Tourists who bought goods in Hong Kong were given "certificates of origin," showing that the articles in question were made in Hong Kong and not on the Chinese mainland. When a troupe from the Peking Opera played in Canada, some of us drove up to Montreal to see a performance or two. The State Department announced that such persons had been guilty under the Trading with the Enemy Act.

Throughout this period Taiwan was accepted diplomatically as "China" and given a seat in the Security Council which the U.N. Charter assigns to China. Each year some U.N. members introduced into the Assembly resolutions proposing People's China as a U.N. member. Each year the United States delegation introduced a procedural resolution "that at this session of the U.N. Assembly the question of the admission of People's China shall not be discussed." Each year (including

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1970) United States arm-twisting lobbyists in the Assembly whipped up sufficient votes to pass the resolution and exclude People's China from the U.N. Assembly. Meanwhile, dozens of newly-formed African and Asian nations were admitted to the United Nations.

United Nations advocates, during the closing years of the 1936-1945 war, had stressed the dangers of future wars and the need for an organization that could preserve world peace. Such an organization to be effective must include all important nations in its membership. Still, U.S. spokesmen insisted upon the exclusion of People's China, a country containing more than one fifth of the human race.

This shameless, dangerous farce was repeated year after year, until the spring of 1971 when an international table-tennis tournament was staged in Japan. An American team took part in the tournament. Some genius (was it Chou En-lai?) suggested that at the end of the tournament the American ping-pong team be invited to China to play a series of exhibition games with Chinese teams.

Table tennis is *the* Chinese game. Millions of Chinese play it to perfection. If the exhibition games could be arranged, the Chinese were bound to win.

Whoever originated the idea, China's Prime Minister took charge of the arrangements. An invitation was extended and accepted. The American table-tennis team, plus four American journalists, went to China, were acclaimed, wined and dined, and toured about the country. They were even allowed to win some ping-pong games, while U.S. newsmen sent dispatches home from China.

Overnight the barriers of ostracism erected, maintained and strengthened by State Department efforts over the years were swept away. American ping-pong players became international correspondents. President Nixon, harried by public opinion poll opposition and with an eye on the 1972 election, got into the act with television smiles and promises of cooperation.

Twenty years of United States anti-China diplomacy were swept under the rug and Washington moved swiftly into a new era of verbal coexistence. As an earnest of this conver-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sion, there was talk of a Chinese ping-pong team's being invited to visit the United States.

Edgar Snow Interviews Mao Tse-tung

Before ping pong broke through the U.S.-directed diplomatic encirclement of China, an American correspondent and author of the book *Red Star Over China* was granted a breakfast-to-lunch interview with China's top figure, Mao Tse-tung. The interview was published in *Life,* April 30, 1971.

Mao refused to permit direct quotations from the interview, but Edgar Snow wrote it up immediately after it was concluded, and he was also given a stenographic copy of the report, made by one of Mao's secretaries who was present at the interview.

I was particularly intrigued with the interview because it dealt at length with the deification of Mao (a much-criticized section of some of my World Events columns), which played a prominent part in Chinese life during the past decade.

Previously, Mao had been opposed to the cult of personality. With the horrible example of Stalin's descent into the personality-worship inferno, a man of Mao's stature must have turned away in disgust from any such personality debauch. Nevertheless, he and his advisers had taken their chances with this two-edged sword.

Early in the interview Edgar Snow raised the issue of a personality cult by reminding Mao Tse-tung that after their meeting in 1965 Snow's write-up of the affair had been criticized because he had reported Mao Tse-tung as saying that there was indeed a personality cult in China.

Mao Tse-tung agreed with Snow that there had been a personality cult in China in 1965 and that there were good reasons for its existence at that time. He intimated that in 1965 a great deal of power (locally, in the provincial centers, and centrally, in Peking, inside and outside the Chinese Communist Party) was held by anti-Mao elements. At that time more personality cult was needed to arouse the Chinese people sufficiently to eliminate the anti-Mao elements in the Communist Party organization.

In the course of this inner party struggle too much em-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phasis had been laid on the Mao personality cult; today this is evident. But personality cults are deeply rooted in the Chinese mentality with its 3,000 years of emperor worship. In the course of the current struggle, emphasis had been laid on the Four Greats: Great Teacher; Great Leader; Great Supreme Commander; Great Helmsman. All of these honorary titles had been bestowed on Mao. Now they had become a nuisance that must be eliminated sooner or later. Eventually, only one of the Four Greats would be retained, in the simple word: Teacher. Mao had been a primary school teacher in Changsha. And he wanted to be known and remembered as a teacher.

Edgar Snow reminded Mao Tse-tung that at Mao's suggestion, in 1949, the Central Committee of the Communist Party had passed a resolution prohibiting the naming of streets, squares, or cities for any individual. Mao agreed. That resolution had been carried out. But other forms of personality worship had appeared: in slogans, quotations, pictures, busts, and statues. The Red Guards had demanded these things, with the argument that unless they were used, anti-Maoism might develop. Certainly, for a time, there had been need for a personality cult: with Mao once more securely in control, the need for the cult had lessened.

At the same time, there would always be recognition and perhaps worship of gifted individuals. That applied to Mao as it applied to anyone else. Edgar Snow reported that Chairman Mao had pondered much over the human need to worship gods and God. With Mao or without Mao, the personality cult which lit the flames of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution will continue to sear and burn the world over for at least another generation.

Mayors at the Wailing Wall

April 1971 drew to a close amid anguished pleas for help and threats of drastic emergency measures needed to prevent the bankruptcy of some of America's most important cities.

On April 21, 1971, eleven members of the legislative action committee of the United States Conference of Mayors joined Mayor Lindsay of New York in a bus tour of some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the blighted spots of the "largest and richest" city in the Western Hemisphere.

Mayor Landrieu of New Orleans commented: "It's just a difference of degree. We've got the same problems."

Mayor Gribbs of Detroit said: "In the inner city [of Detroit] we have 25 percent unemployment, and among young people, it's 48 percent. I'll close fifteen to thirty-one recreation centers and six fire-houses."

Mayor Uhlman of Seattle: "We have 100,000 trained and educated people out of work. I love to see the other mayors; misery loves company."

Mayor Tate of Philadelphia: "We will lock up twenty-six playgrounds this summer because we don't have the funds for people to run them. We're in trouble and we need help."

Mayor White of Boston stood in the rubbled and gutted buildings of Brownsville and said that the desolate twenty-block area "may be the first tangible sign of the collapse of our civilization." (*New York Times,* April 22, 1971, pp. 1, 48.)

Mayor Lindsay of New York City has been wrestling with budget deficits and calling upon State and Federal authorities to subsidize New York City's faltering economy. On April 19 he eliminated 800 full-time jobs and 2,000 part-time and temporary city jobs, effective May 1. This is the latest cut in New York City employment. The Mayor estimated that it would save the city about $10 million per year.

The next day, New York's Mayor presented four alternative city budgets for the next fiscal year. Under the first of these (a budget of extreme austerity), 90,000 of the city's 350,000 employees would be laid off. This step would be necessary, the Mayor said, unless the State provided additional funds or permitted New York City to raise its taxes or widen its borrowing. Of the 90,000 jobs to be eliminated 60,000 would be layoffs, while 30,000 would be vacancies resulting from death, retirement, or resignation, to which new personnel would not be appointed.

New York State did not rush to the assistance of its overgrown subdivision. Instead, on the same day New York authorities announced the layoff of 8,250 state employees with resulting curtailment of such state services as health, higher ed-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ucation, and recreation. In addition to the layoffs, about 4,000 vacant state jobs would be abolished. (*New York Times,* April 20, 1971, p. 1.)

New York City's financial difficulties are not only fully shared by New York State. The trouble goes deeper. It is also nationwide.

Production of goods and services has leveled off during the past three years, resulting in unemployment, large increases in welfare payments, and a reduction in tax receipts. As demand for public funds increased, there was a decrease in the tax receipts from which public funds are provided.

This is not a new situation. I wrote a book in 1932 called *Must We Starve?* Then, as now, unemployment was rising, production and tax receipts were both declining, and the resulting squeeze was putting pressure on a multitude of Americans, who did starve.

Between 1950 and 1969 Gross National Product in the United States was multiplied by more than three. State and local government spending for goods and services was multiplied by more than five. How was this difference made possible? By increasing state and local government revenues (higher taxes) more than threefold, and increasing state and local government debt more than fourfold.

The years from 1950 to 1969 were moderately prosperous. During this period economic wisdom would have put aside something for the rainy day. Instead, the entire governmental apparatus in the United States, from federal to local, went on a spending spree. When there was no more money in the till, they went into debt. We have a word to describe such conduct: spendthrift; one who is wasteful, extravagant, prodigal. Those words accurately describe U.S. public economy during the past two decades.

America's mayors would do well to learn to stay away from their wailing wall and devote their time and energy to living inside their income, while they lay aside a fund sufficient to tide them over the next rainy day, which will surely come.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Continued from inside front cover)

and color groups indicated, i.e., the percentages not institutionalized, not in the armed forces, and actually *working or* looking for work on the given dates." The italicized words were omitted from the text as printed.

The following *errata* in Russell Stetler, ed., *The Military Art of People's War: Selected Writings of General Vo Nguyen Giap*, MR Press, 1970, have been pointed out to us by Keith Buchanan who reviews the book in this issue of MR:

P. 79 — The area of Vietnam is given as "nearly thirty thousand square miles." In actual fact it is some four times this or, as the Hanoi-published English language version of this particular essay puts it, it is "nearly 330,000 square kilometers."

P. 183 — "over a hundred million individuals participating in direct struggle" should read "over a hundred million *participations*" (i.e., individual acts). It may be noted that the term "participations" is retained in its original and correct form on p. 194. The *total* population of Vietnam is given by Giap as 30 million (p. 79).

P. 277 — The text says that the American imperialists "foresaw the possibility of a war waged by the American infantry on the Asian mainland." This makes much less sense than the translation of Wilfred Burchett (who conducted this interview) as given in his *Vietnam North* (p. 121): ". . . have had a glimpse of what it involved for them in committing American infantry on the Asian mainland."

P. 278 — Giap is reported as saying that the U.S. bombings of the North "should not be a surprise to you." Burchett's version (*ibid.*, p. 122) has (and again this makes more sense) "are no surprise to us."

P. 279 — "courageous for good reason" gives a rather different emphasis from Burchett's "strong in their own right."

P. 280 — By their raids against the North the United States is described as carrying the war in Vietnam "all the way." Burchett's version (*ibid.*, p. 124) reads "to the whole of Vietnam."

These corrections will be made when the book is reprinted, but this is the only way we can hope to reach purchasers of the first printing.

* * *

Two kinds of letters keep appearing in our mail. First, letters from readers who have old copies of MR or books they no longer want. They offer to send them to us or to some group that could use them. Second, letters from groups or organizations which are trying to build up libraries for the use of their members. Except in rare cases, we do not need old MRs and have no space to keep books. Under the circumstances, perhaps the best we can do is to list from time to time in this space the names and addresses of groups which are anxious to receive donations of books and magazines. Here are two, culled from recent weeks' mail: (1) Southern Appalachian Center, 630 Fourth Street, Huntington, West Virginia, 25701. (2) (For the Afro-American Society and the Partido Unido Mexicano-Americano, prisoners' study groups): Minister of Information Donald S. Brown, c/o H. L. Scott, Box W, Lompoc, California 93436.

If you are in doubt about the suitability of whatever you offer, or have any other questions, please write to the group concerned, not to us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Christopher Caudwell

Introduction by Sol Yurick

In 1938, a year after his death in Spain, Christopher Caudwell's *Studies in a Dying Culture* was published, to be followed eleven years later by a second volume, *Further Studies in a Dying Culture*. This volume makes available once more both important works by one of the foremost Marxist critics of the thirties.

The first book consists of eight essays: on George Bernard Shaw, T. E. Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, Sigmund Freud, and on pacifism and violence, love, and liberty.

The second is divided into five essays: "The Breath of Discontent: A Study in Bourgeois Religion," "Beauty: A Study in Bourgeois Aesthetics," "Men and Nature: A Study in Bourgeois History," "Consciousness: A Study in Bourgeois Psychology," and "Reality: A Study in Bourgeois Philosophy."

John Strachey said of Caudwell's work as exemplified by these essays: "He shows a width of perception, a generosity of sympathy, a capacity to understand the motive forces that move the minds of men. He shows an ability to use his Marxian insight into impersonal social forces in order to gain an understanding of the tragedies of individual men."

"The unparalleled increase in productive powers has given birth, not to peace, plenty, and happiness, but to war, famine, and misery. What is the explanation? Either the Devil has come amongst us having great power, or there is a causal explanation for a disease common to economics, science, and art. Why then have not all the psychoanalysts, Eddingtons, Keyneses, Spenglers, and bishops who have surveyed the scene, been able to locate a source of infection common to all modern culture, and, therefore, surely obvious enough? For answer, these people must take to themselves the words of Herzen: 'We are not the doctors, we are the disease.' "

50% discount for MR Associates. Enclose payment with order, add sales tax where applicable. (Canadian purchasers paying in Canadian currency, please add 5%.)

Monthly Review Press 116 West 14th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10011
33/37 Moreland Street, London, E.C. 1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED